English Translations of

Majmoo'al-Fatawa of late Scholar Ibn Bazz (R)

Second Edition

By:
Sheikh `Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah ibn `AbdulRahman ibn Bazz (May Allah forgive and reward *al-Firdouse* to him and his parents)

He was The Mufti of **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,**
Chairman of the Council of Senior Scholars,
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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Beneficent

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What is the religious ruling of the 'Eid prayer?

Q: Is it permissible for a Muslim to abandon 'Eid prayer without an excuse? Is it permissible to prevent women from offering 'Eid prayer with the people?

A: Many scholars believe that 'Eid prayer is a collective obligation and that some people may leave it. However, attending this prayer and participating with Muslim brothers is a stressed Sunnah that should not be abandoned unless there is a legal excuse. Some scholars believe that it is an individual obligation just like Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer, so it is not permissible for any free Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions) who stays in his city to abandon it, this saying is the more appropriate and correct one. It is an act of Sunnah for women to attend this prayer while wearing the Hijab (veil) decently and they should not apply perfume as it is authentically reported in Al-Bukhari and Muslim from Um `Atiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said, (We were ordered to go out (for Eid) and also to take along with us the mature girls and the menstruating women to present themselves at the religious gathering and invocation of Muslims, but the menstruating women should keep away from their Musalla (place of prayer).) According to another narration, (one of them said

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O Prophet of Allah, if one of us does not find Jilbab (loose outer garment with no front opening) to wear and go out? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Let her dress in one of her sisters' Jilbabs.)

This is clear proof that it is stressed to let women go out to attend 'Eid prayer to witness what is good and to supplicate with the Muslims.

The 'Eid Prayer is not obligatory to be established in the desert or while one is traveling

Q: Brother M.`A.A from Tunisia says, once I went to the countryside in my town in Africa

and it happened to be the day of `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) and I saw the men and women hurrying to visit graves. In the morning of the day of 'Eid, I was shocked to see all the attendants offer prayers in the graveyard and they were all led in prayer by an old man. I was shocked by what I saw. I did not offer the so called 'Eid prayer with them.

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What is the ruling in Islam on this Salah (Prayer) knowing that the people in the countryside have no Masjid (mosque) or a place of prayer as they live in separate tents.

By the way, when I say that they offered prayer in the graveyard, I mean that they offered prayer away from the graves.

A: All Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists). 'Eid prayer is to be established only in towns and villages, it is not to be established in deserts or while one is traveling as indicated by the Prophet's Sunnah. It was not known that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) or his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) offered 'Eid prayer in travel or in the desert.

When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) performed the Farewell Hajj, he did not offer prayer in `Arafah. This day was Friday and he did not offer the 'Eid prayer in Mina.

Following the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) leads only to all good and happiness. May Allah grant us success!

Establishing 'Eid prayer in the stadium

From `Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother, the Brigadier General and the Dean of King `Abdul-`Aziz Military College, May Allah sustain him!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Referring to your letter number 3/9/2619 dated 29/6/1408, in which it said

Q : We are affiliated to King `Abdul-`Aziz Military College and we live there but we have no place in which we can offer 'Eid prayers and supplicate Allah to provide us with rain. For the past four years, we have been offering 'Eid prayers in the stadium in the military college, this Musalla (a place for Prayer) is open and covered with Nylon.

Would you please point out to us the ruling on these mentioned prayers in the mentioned place.

A: This is permissible and there is nothing wrong with offering your prayers in the place mentioned above or with the matters that you mentioned.

As long as this place is clean and free of any impurities, it is permissible to offer 'Eid prayers there but if it is possible to find a separate place, that would be better and more appropriate.

May Allah guide you, bless your efforts, and help you do everything good! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

`Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz

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Minimum Number of People Needed for Establishing the `Eid Prayer

What happens if 'Eid was on a Friday?

Q: Is it necessary to have a minimum number to establish 'Eid prayer as Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer? What happens if the 'Eid was on a Friday? I have heard that the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer then will not be obligatory on the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) but only on the Imam, so how would it be only obligatory on the Imam and how can he offer it individually?

A: 'Eid and Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayers are of the Muslims greatest rituals and both of them are obligatory. Jumu`ah prayer is an individual obligation and 'Eid is a collective obligation as seen by most of the scholars. Other scholars held the view that 'Eid prayer is an individual obligation. Scholars differed in the matter of the minimum number needed for this prayer. The most correct opinion is that three or more people is the minimum number by which Jumu`ah and 'Eid prayer could be established. The opinion that the minimum number is forty lacks evidence. Residence is also a condition for the obligation of Jumu`ah; so the Bedouins and travelers are exempted from the obligation of offering Jumu`ah or 'Eid prayers. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) performed the Farewell Hajj, the Day of `Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah) was on Friday so the Prophet did not offer Jumu`ah prayer nor did he offer prayer on the Day of Sacrifice (10th of Dhul-Hijjah) - Day of Nahr (Sacrifice, 10th of Dhul-Hijjah, when pilgrims slaughter their sacrificial animal) and this indicates that

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travelers and people in the desert are under no obligation to offer 'Eid or Jumu`ah prayers. If the 'Eid was on a Friday, it is permissible for those who attended 'Eid prayer to offer Jumu`ah prayer or to offer Zhuhr prayer as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) permitted leaving the Jumu`ah prayer for those who attended the `Eid Prayer. He said ﴿Two feasts ('Eid and Friday) have synchronized on this day of yours, so whoever witnesses the 'Eid (Prayer), then Jumu'ah (Prayer) is not obligatory for him."﴾ However, it is not permissible in this case to abandon Zhuhr prayer and it is better to offer Jumu`ah prayer with the people and if it is not possible, one then has to offer Zhuhr prayer but the Imam should lead those who attended Jumu'ah prayer if they were three or more including the Imam and if the Imam was only with one person, then they have to offer it as Zhuhr prayer.

Acts prescribed for comers to 'Eid Musalla

Q: A questioner from Riyadh writes that he has noticed that when some people come to offer the 'Eid Prayer, they offer two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) while others do not, and some others start reciting the Takbir ("Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, La ilaha illa Allah, Allahu Akbar wa Lillahi'l-hamd [Allah is the Greatest! Allah is the Greatest! There is no deity but Allah! Allah is the Greatest and to Allah is all praise!]").

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Please explain the Islamic rulings on these matters. Is there any difference between holding the 'Eid Prayer in the Masjid (mosque) or in the 'Eid Musalla (place for Prayer)?

A: The Sunnah (action following the example of the Prophet) for one who comes to the 'Eid Musalla to offer Salat-ul-'Eid (the Festival Prayer) or Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain), is to sit down and not offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque). It is not reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) or his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) did this, as far as we know. However, if the Salah (Prayer) is held inside a Masjid, then one should offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid, because of the general applicability of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾When anyone of you enters the Masjid, let them not sit down until they have prayed two Rak'ahs.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It is prescribed for those who sit awaiting the 'Eid Prayer to continuously recite Tahlil (saying: "La ilaha illa Allah [There is no god except Allah]") and Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"), because these expressions of praise are the motto of this day, and this is the Sunnah for everyone inside or outside the Masjid, until the Khutbah (sermon) is over. If one busies himself with reading Qur'an, this is also commendable. May Allah grant us success!

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Ruling on offering Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid before Salat-ul-`Eid

From 'Abdul 'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother, may Allah protect him!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

In reference to your question registered at the Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta', no. 2984, dated 29 Rajab, 1407 A.H.,

I inform you that it is prescribed for a person who offers Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer) in the Masjid (mosque) to offer before it Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) even if at the time when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah, for it is considered one of the prayers that are offered due to a certain reason, based upon the generality of the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾When anyone among you enters the Masjid, he should not sit until he observes two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer).﴿

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However, if one offers Salat-ul-`Eid at a Musalla (a place for Prayer) that is prepared for offering the Two `Eid Prayers, it is not prescribed to offer any Salah before Salat-ul-`Eid, for the rulings of the Masjid do not apply to the Musalla in every sense and because there is no Sunnah (supererogatory) Salah before or after Salat-ul-`Eid.

May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly

Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

'Abdul 'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz

Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") during the days of Dhul-Hijjah

To his Eminence, the respected honorable Sheikh `Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah Ibn Baz, may Allah (Exalted be He) preserve him! I respectfully convey my greetings:

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) May Allah, the Creator, shower us with the blessing of Islam forever! May Allah keep you safe! As for us, we are fine, praise be to Allah. May Allah keep you safe and obedient to Him! Kindly, give us your Fatwa regarding unrestricted Takbir during `Eid al-Adha. Is the Takbir following every Salah included in the unrestricted Takbir or not? Is it Sunnah, mustahabb (desirable), or bid'ah? This issue has become controversial. May Allah, the Creator, preserve you! Peace be upon you!

From `Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah Ibn Baz to our dear brother M. `A.M., may Allah grant you success, amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!):

O beloved brother, your message dated 24/2/1387 has reached me, may Allah guide you to His Way, and we are familiar with these questions you asked.

Following is the answer: All praise be to Allah Alone. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah,

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his family, Companions, and those who follow his guidance!

With regard to Takbir on `Eid al-Adha, it is prescribed that it should commence from the beginning of the month to the end of the thirteenth day of Dhu'l-Hijjah. Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾That they may witness things that are of benefit to them (i.e. reward of Hajj in the Hereafter, and also some worldly gain from trade), and mention the Name of Allâh on appointed days (i.e. 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th day of Dhul-Hijjah)﴿ i.e. the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah. Also, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states: ﴾And remember Allâh during the appointed Days.﴿ i.e. the days of Tashriq (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah). The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾The Days of Tashriq are days of eating, drinking and remembrance of Allah, the Almighty.﴿ (Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih) in his Sahih (Book of Authentic Hadith). Al-Bukhaari mentioned in his Sahih as a Hadith Mu`allaq (Hadith missing a link in the Sanad, reported directly from the Prophet) that Ibn `Umar and Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them both) ﴾used to go out to the market-place on the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, reciting Takbir, and the people used to recite Takbir because of their reciting Takbir.﴿ `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab and his son `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them both) used to recite Takbir during the days of Mina in the Masjid (mosque) and in the camps. They would raise their voices until Mina echoed with the sound of their Takbir. It is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and a group of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) used to recite Takbir following each of the five prayers from

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Fajr (Dawn) Prayer on the day of `Arafah until `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer on the thirteenth day of Dhul-Hijjah. This is equally applied to those who are not on Hajj. Those who are on Hajj should concentrate on their state of Ihram (ritual state for Hajj and `Umrah) and recite the Talbiyah (devotional expressions chanted at certain times during Hajj and `Umrah) until they stone Jamrat-ul-`Aqabah (the closest stone pillar to Makkah) on the Day of Sacrifice (Yawm al-Nahr). After that they may recite Takbir. The Takbir should start with the first stone thrown at the Jamarah mentioned. If the pilgrim recites the Takbir along with the Talbiyah, that is fine, because Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ﴾Some would recite the Talbiyah on the Day of `Arafah and they were not reproved for doing so. Others would recite Takbir and they were not reproved for doing so.﴿ However, it is better for one who is in state of Ihram to recite the Talbiyah and for the one who is not in a state of Ihram to recite Takbir on the days mentioned.

Hence, we know that, according to the soundest scholarly view, unrestricted Takbir and the Takbir restricted to certain times are combined on five days i.e. the Day of `Arafah, the Day of Sacrifice, and the three days of Tashriq. With regard to the eighth day (of Dhul-Hijjah) and the days preceding it, Takbir on those days may be recited at any time, not only at certain times, based on the Ayahs and reports mentioned above. It is narrated in al-Musnad on the authority of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾There are no days during which righteous deeds are greater and dearer to Allah than these ten days (The first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah). Therefore, recite Tahlil (saying: "La ilaha illa Allah [There is no god except Allah]"), Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"), and Tahmid (saying: "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]")"﴿ or as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said.

Clarification and explanation of the ruling on reciting Takbir in groups before `Eid Prayers

All praise be to Allah alone. Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his family and Companions. To proceed:

I have read what his Eminence brother Sheikh Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Jamal, may Allah grant him success in what pleases Him, published in some local newspapers where he deemed it strange to prevent congregational Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") in Masjids (mosques) before `Eid Prayers because it is judged as Bid`ah that should be prevented. In his essay, Sheikh Ahmad has tried to prove that reciting congregational Takbir is not Bid`ah and that it is impermissible to prevent it. Such opinion of the Sheikh was approved of by some writers. Fearing that this issue may confuse those who are unaware of the facts, we wish to clarify that reciting Takbir on the night before 'Eid in preparation for Salat `Eid-ul-Fitr (the Festival of Breaking the Fast) and before `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) during the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah and during the days of Tashriq is permissible during these great times and carries great reward. Allah (Exalted be He) states concerning reciting Takbir during `Eid-ul-Fitr (the Festival of Breaking the Fast): ﴾(He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allâh [i.e. to say Takbîr (Allâhu Akbar; Allâh is the Most Great)] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.﴿ Regarding the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah

and the days of Tashriq, Allah (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾That they may witness things that are of benefit to them (i.e. reward of Hajj in the Hereafter, and also some worldly gain from trade), and mention the Name of Allâh on appointed days (i.e. 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th day of Dhul-Hijjah), over the beast of cattle that He has provided for them (for sacrifice), [at the time of their slaughtering by saying: (Bismillah, Wallâhu-Akbar, Allâhumma Minka wa Ilaik)].﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾And remember Allâh during the appointed Days.﴿

Among the Mashru` (Islamically approved) remembrance during these well-known appointed days are both unrestricted Takbir and Takbir restricted to certain times during the days of Dhul-Hijjah as proved by the pristine Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) and the practices of the Salaf (righteous predecessors). The description of the permissible Takbir is that every Muslim should say it individually for himself in a loud voice so others can hear and follow him and be reminded by it. As for the innovated congregational Takbir, this is when a group of two or more raise their voices in Takbir beginning and ending in unison and in a particular manner.

Such a practice is baseless and unsubstantiated. It is a Bid`ah (innovation in Islam) regarding the way of reciting Takbir for which Allah has sent down no authority. Whoever disapproves of reciting Takbir in this manner is right. This is based on the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Whoever performs an action for which there is no sanction from our behalf, it is to be rejected.﴿

This means that it is rejected because it is not Mashru` (Islamically approved).

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) also stated: ﴾Avoid novelties (in Islam), for every novelty is an innovation, and every innovation leads to misguidance.﴿

This congregational Takbir is innovated and thus it is Bid`ah (innovation in Islam). If people have a certain practice that contradicts the pristine Shari`ah, it must be prevented and condemned because acts of `Ibadah (worship) are Tawqifiy (bound by an Islamic text and not amenable to personal opinion). Their legislation is bound by the text of the Qur'an or the Sunnah. As for the viewpoints and opinions of people, they cannot stand as proofs if they contradict Shari`ah proofs. The same applies to Maslahah Mursalah (matters of public benefit), they do not stand as a proof for acts of worship. Rather, acts of worship are to be proven based on a text from the Qur'an or the Sunnah, or based on unanimous agreement.

What is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) is that Muslims should recite Takbir according to the prescribed manner based on the Shari`ah proofs i.e. to recite Takbir individiually.

Congregational Takbir has been forbidden by his Eminence Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim, The Grand Mufty of Saudi Arabia, (may Allah be merciful with him) who issued a fatwa in this regard. As for me, I have issued more than one fatwa preventing it. There was also a fatwa issued by the Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta' preventing it.

His Eminence Sheikh Hammud Ibn `Abdullah Al-Tuwijry (may Allah be merciful with him) also compiled a valuable research paper on condemning and preventing it. This essay is published and circulated and contains

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sufficient and decisive proofs for preventing congregational Takbir, praise be to Allah. Regarding the argument presented by Sheikh Ahmad concerning what `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) did accompanied by people in Mina, this cannot stand as a proof because what `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and people did in Mina differs from the congregational Takbir. It is considered a permissible form of Takbir, because he (may Allah be pleased with him) raised his voice with Takbir to apply the Sunnah and remind people of it. Seeing that, people started to recite Takbir individually and not in unison with `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) from beginning to end, which is not the case with those reciting congregational Takbir today. All that is related from the Salaf (righteous predecessors) (may Allah have mercy on them) regarding Takbir follows the Shari` formula. Any one claiming other than this should present the proofs. The same is applied to calling for `Eid prayer, the Tarawih prayer, Night Optional prayer, or Witr prayer. Announcing the call to prayer in all such cases is baseless and Bid`ah (innovation in Islam). It is proven through the authentic Hadiths related from the Prophet that he (peace be upon him) used to perform `Eid prayer without either Adhan (call to Prayer) or Iqamah (call to start the Prayer). As far as we know, none of the scholars stated that there is another call (to prayer) with other wording. Those who make this claim should substantiate it with proofs, though sources indicate that there is no such proof. Thus, it is not permissible for anyone to legislate an act of worship, whether actions or words, except with evidence either from the Glorious Book or the authentic Sunnah, or when it can be based on the unanimous agreement of scholars as previously mentioned. This is based on the general Shar`i proofs forbidding and warning against Bid`ah (innovation in religion), which include the statement of Allah (may He be Praised): ﴾Or have they partners (with Allâh — false gods) who have instituted for them a religion which Allâh has not ordained?﴿

They also include the two Hadiths previously mentioned at the beginning of this advice, as well as the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Whoever introduces something into this affair of ours which is not of it, it is to be rejected.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

And his statement (may peace be upon him) in (Khutbat Al-Jum'ah) Friday sermon: ﴾And then, the best of the speech is embodied in the Book of Allah, and the best of the guidance is the guidance given by Muhammad. The most evil of affairs are innovations; and every innovation is error.﴿ Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih. There are many Hadiths and Athar (narrations from the Companions) in this regard.

It is Allah Whom we invoke to grant us, Sheikh Ahmad, and all our brothers success and the best understanding of His Deen, to keep us firm on it, and to make us all callers to guidance and supporters of the truth. May Allah protect us and all Muslims against all that contradicts His law. He is the Most Generous. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his family and Companions!

The General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

`Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah Ibn Baz

Congratulations on 'Eid

Q: People congratulate one another on the 'Eid day by saying, "Taqaballa Allahu mina wa minkum Al-'Amal Al-Saliha" (may Allah accept from you and us the good deeds), is it not better to ask Allah to accept all our deeds and is there any particular supplication to mention on such an occasion?

A: It is permissible for a Muslim to say to his fellow Muslim on the 'Eid day or on other days, "May Allah accept from you and us the good deeds", and I do not know any particular supplication for that occasion but believers have to pray for each other with good supplications as indicated by the many pieces of evidence reported in this regard. May Allah grant us success!

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Eclipse Prayer

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Ruling on the eclipse prayer

Q: What is the ruling on the eclipse prayer? Do the two Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (So when you see them (in a state of eclipse), invoke Allah and pray until it is over) **and** (hasten for the Salah (prayer)) **prove that it is obligatory?**

A: Eclipse prayer is a stressed Sunnah based on the authentic Hadiths related in this regard. According to the scholars, it is not obligatory because when a man asked about Salah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) responded that he was obliged to perform the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers. The inquirer added: (Am I obliged to do anything else besides this? He (the Holy Prophet) said: No, except that which you do voluntarily out of your own free will.)

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Salat-ul-Kusuf is prescribed when one sees an eclipse,

not when one hears news of an eclipse from the astronomers

Praise be to Allah. May peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, and upon his family, his Companions, and those who are guided by his guidance.

According to `Abdul-`Aziz Ibn Sultan Al-Shimmary, the director of Hilal observatories in the Astronomy and Geophysics Research Institute in King `Abdul-`Aziz City for Science and Technology, Al-Riyadh newspaper issue dated Sunday, 14th of Jumadah Al-'Ulah, 1416 A.H. published that a lunar eclipse will occur in the evening of the said day. It also published in issue dated Monday, 29th of Jumadah Al-'Ulah,1416 A.H. that `Abdul-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Abu `Ammah the Dean of faculty of science in King Saud University stated that a solar eclipse will occur in the morning of Tuesday corresponding 30th of Jumadah Al-'Ulah,1416 A.H.

I was informed that some Imams (the ones who lead congregational Prayer) performed Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse) based on the announcements of astronomers published in the newspaper although the the eclipse did not take place. I find it imperative to explain the ruling in Islam on this matter.

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There are authentic hadith according to which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) enjoined offering the eclipse prayer and reciting dhikr and du'a' when the Muslims see a solar or lunar eclipse. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The sun and the moon are two of the signs of Allah and

they do not become eclipsed for the death or birth of anyone. But Allah sends them to make His slaves fear (Him), so if you see that, then pray and make du'a' until it is over.) Another narration reads: (So if you see that, then hasten to remember Allah and call upon Him and seek His forgiveness.) So, he (peace be upon him) made the command of offering Salah, making du'a', remembering Allah, and asking for forgiveness conditional upon the actual sighting of the eclipse and not on the reports of the astronomers.

Every Muslim must adhere to the Sunnah and act in accordance with it, and beware of everything that is contrary to it.

Hence, we know that those who offer the eclipse prayer on the basis of astronomical reports are making a mistake and going against the Sunnah.

It should also be noted that it is not prescribed for the people who live in a country where the eclipse is not happening to offer the prayer, because the Messenger (peace be upon him) made the command of praying conditional upon the actual sighting of the eclipse, not upon astronomical news that an eclipse is going to happen or on its happening in another country. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).)

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says:(Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) you have a good example to follow) The Prophet (peace be upon him) offered the eclipse prayer when that happened in Madinah and the people saw it. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad صلى ا لله عليه وسلم) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah - legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements) (among the sects) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.)

It is known that he (peace be upon him) was the most knowledgeable and most sincere of people, and that he was the one who conveyed the rulings from Allah (Exalted be He). If it was prescribed to offer the eclipse prayer on the basis of astronomers' reports, or when an eclipse occurs in another region that is only seen by the local inhabitants, then he would have said so and would have guided his Ummah (nation based on one creed) to do that. Since he did not say that, rather, he said the opposite, and he told his ummah to base their actions on actual sighting of the eclipse, we know that this prayer is only prescribed for those who see the eclipse and in whose land it occurs.

Since Allah (may He be Exalte) has ordained us to explain the truth, advise one another, call to the path of guidance and has warned against anything that opposes it, I find it imperative to write this speech.

May Allah guide us and all Muslims to useful knowledge and act upon it, and protect all of us from

speaking in the Name of Allah without knowledge. We ask Allah to set right the affairs of all Muslims, grant them deep understanding in religion, and rectify their rulers for He is Able to do this. May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, Companions and followers in righteousness!

Q: Does an eclipse take place on the tenth or the fourth day of the month? Some claim that the eclipse which took place during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when his son Ibrahim died was on the fourth day. Is it true?

A: I know of no evidence that an eclipse is connected to a certain time. The most correct view is that a solar and lunar eclipse can take place at any time. Those who single out a certain time for this phenomenon have no proof as far as we know. May Allah grant us success!

How should Salat-ul-Kusuf be done?

Q: How should Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse) and Salat-ul-Khusuf (Prayer on a lunar eclipse) be performed? Is there any difference between them? What is your opinion on the reports published by the papers about the timings of a solar or lunar eclipse?

A: There are authentic Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) showed how Salat-ul-Kusuf can be performed. He (peace be upon him) ordered that people should be called to it by announcing as-salatu jami'ah "'Gather for Salah".

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The most authentic reports concerning this Salah show that it consists of two Rak'ahs and that in each Rak'ah one should make two recitations and perform two Ruku' (bowings) and two Sujud (prostrations). The person should make lengthy recitation, Ruku' and Sujud. In the meantime, the first recital and Ruku' should be longer than the second ones. Similarly, the recitation in the second Rak`ah should be shorter than the second recital in the first Rak`ah. The person should make Ruku' in the second Rak`ah for a shorter time than the two Ruku' in the first one. During the second Rak`ah, the person should make a second recital and Ruku' for a shorter time than the first in the same Rak`ah.

As for the two Sujud, it is a Sunnah (recommended) to be lengthy providing that this does not cause any difficulty to the Ma'mums because this was the Prophet's (peace be upon him) way. Upon completing Salah, the Imam, if he is knowledgeable, is allowed to give a sermon and tell people that the solar and lunar eclipse are two signs of Allah (Exalted be He) by which He frightens His servants. The Muslims, upon seeing it, are prescribed to offer Salah, remember Allah (Exalted be He), make Du`a' and Takbir, give in charity and emancipate a believing slave until the end of the eclipse. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Verily the sun and the moon are two signs among the signs of Allah by which He frightens His servants and they do not eclipse on account of the death or birth of anybody. So when you see either of them, observe Prayer, and supplicate Allah (may He be Exalted) till it is cleared from you.﴿ Another narration reads, ﴾So whenever you see them, haste to remember Allah, invoke Him and ask Him for forgiveness.﴿

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It is narrated in some Hadith that the person should give in charity and emancipate slaves.

The astronomical reports about the timing of the eclipse must not be taken as the basis for offering Salat-ul-Kusuf. Some people of knowledge, including Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and his knowledgeable disciple Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah be merciful with both of them, supported this view saying that the astronomers may sometimes be wrong and then these reports are not reliable and people should not offer Salat-ul-Kusuf depending on them. Rather, they have to offer the Salah upon seeing the eclipse when it is happening.

The publications of the astronomers' reports about the timing of eclipse should be banned by the

Ministry of Information lest some people should be deceived by them. These publications may make people feel less fear upon seeing the eclipse. Allah (Exalted be He) has made them to be frightening and hence, people remember, fear, invoke Allah, and treat their slaves well. May Allah grant us success!

Q: It is reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas and `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse) in the form of an eight Rak`ah Prayer in which he prostrated four times. However, it was reported on the authority of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) that he (peace be upon him) offered Salat-ul-Kusuf in the form of six Rak`ahs with four prostrations. These Hadith were ranked as Sahih by Imam Muslim who recorded them in his Sahih book of Hadith. They were also ranked as Sahih by Ishaq Ibn Rahawyah, Ibn Khuzaymah, Al-Sabghi, Al-Khattabi and others. However, some criticized these Hadith and based their argument on the fact that a solar eclipse occurred only once during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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What is Your Eminence's view on this issue? Is there any proof to indicate that a solar eclipse occurred only once during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him)?

A: The most authentic regarding Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse) is what recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in their Sahih books of Hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered Salat-ul-Kusuf in the form of two Rak`ahs when the sun eclipsed on the day when his son Ibrahim passed away. He offered two Rak`ah; each consisting of two recitations, two Ruku`s (bowing) and two prostrations.

This is the soundest view according to the scholars and any other view is incorrect. It is recorded that when the Prophet's son, Ibrahim passed away, some people thought that the sun eclipsed due to his death. The Prophet (peace be upon him) informed them that the sun and the moon are two signs of Allah; they do not darken upon the death or birth of any person, but Allah strikes fear into His servants through them. May Allah grant us success!

The announcement for the Solar Eclipse Prayer

is to call out "Al-Salah Jami`ah

Q: Mr. M.G. from United Arab Emirates asks, "It is related that the announcement for the Solar Eclipse Prayer is to call out, "Al-Salah Jami`ah i.e. gather for Salah". Should one then call out once or repeat it? How many times should it be repeated? Please, advise. May Allah reward you!

A: It is authentically reported that (the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave the order to gather people for the eclipse prayer by calling out, "Al-Salah Jami`ah".)

It is an act of Sunnah for the caller to repeat this until he thinks that people have heard him and there is no limit for this according to our knowledge. May Allah grant us success!

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The ruling on offering the Eclipse Prayer during the times when it is forbidden to offer Prayer

In the name of Allah. All Praise is due to Allah. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be on Allah's Messenger, his companions and those who followed his guidance.

Scholars have differed with regard to the ruling on offering Eclipse Prayer during the times when it is forbidden to offer prayers, such as when a lunar eclipse occurs after sunrise or in the time of afternoon. Some scholars are of the opinion that offering prayer in these two times is prohibited; however, it is permissible to recite Takbir and Adhkar, to ask Allah for forgiveness, and to give in charity and free bondsmen according to authentic Hadith including the Prophet's statement, ﴾Verily the sun and the moon are two signs among the signs of Allah by which He awes His Servants and they do not eclipse on account of the death or birth of anyone. So when you witness either of them, hasten to remember Allah, invoke Him and seek His forgiveness.﴿ Moreover, it is authentically reported in the Hadith of `Aishah and others that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave orders to recite Takbir, give in charity, supplicate Allah, and emancipate bondsmen upon the occurrence of an eclipse. However, other scholars confirm that offering the eclipse prayer is permissible during the two aforementioned times owing to the general authentic Hadith of the Prophet which orders the Eclipse Prayer upon the occurrence of an eclipse. They are many Hadith such as his (peace be upon him) statement, ﴾So when you see anyone of them,

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perform the Prayer and supplicate Allah till it is cleared.﴿ This later view is the soundest based on the aforementioned Hadith as well as the fact that the Solar Eclipse Prayer is among the prayers that are performed for a reason. The preponderant view of scholars is that a prayer that is performed for a specific reason is not prohibited during certain forbidden times. This prohibition is applied to prayers that have no special reason behind performing them, whereas prayers that have reasons are not included here; such as the Solar Eclipse Prayer and Tawaf (circumambulation of Ka`bah) Prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾O Banu `Abd Manaf, do not prevent anyone from performing

Tawaf (circumambulation) around this Al-Bayt (the House: another name for the Ka`bah) or performing Prayer (therein) at any time, day or night.) This is like the ruling with regard to Tahiyyat Al-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) for the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, (When anyone among you enters the mosque, he should not sit until he offers two Rak`ahs.) The Hadith includes the times forbidden to offer prayer therein and other times. Among the prayers that are performed for a reason is Sunnah-Al-Wudu' (two Raka`ahs offered following performing Wudu') as it is prescribed after performing Wudu' (ceremonial ablution) to offer two Rak`ahs according to the authentic Hadith of the Prophet in this regard.

This

opinion is confirmed by Sheikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah confer mercy upon him) and a group of scholars based on the aforementioned Hadiths. Hence, if a solar eclipse appears in the afternoon, it is prescribed for Muslims to offer the Eclipse Prayer, to recite Adhkar (invocations and Remembrances repeated at certain times on a regular basis), supplicate Allah, recite Takbir (saying "Allah Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest)), seek Allah's Forgiveness, and give in charity in accordance with the Hadiths in this regard. Moreover, if a lunar eclipse occurs after the break of dawn, the explicit meanings of special evidence, as mentioned previously, establish the legality of offering Eclipse Prayer. This is because the light of the moon is not totally obscured. It is prescribed to offer the Lunar Eclipse Prayer due to the general meaning of the Hadiths. If one does not perform the Eclipse Prayer, there is no blame on him according to the first view of scholars. Moreover, the light of moon appears in the night and night has disappeared. Also, if one is to offer the Eclipse Prayer one should take the initiative to perform it before dawn. If a lunar eclipse occurs before dawn appears and people do not realize it until after dawn, they should offer Eclipse Prayer before Fajr (Dawn) Prayer and take care not to prolong the prayer so they may offer Fajr Prayer before its time elapses. Thus, we have reconciled the Hadiths regarding this issue and applied them all. It is worth mentioning that the information taken from astronomers is not to be relied upon. The Eclipse Prayer should not be offered upon their information, but people should weigh this information against what is stated in the Hadith. And it is Allah Who grants success.

Q: Solar eclipse may occur in the time of afternoon, should Eclipse Prayer be offered in this time taking into consideration that it is forbidden to perform prayer during that time and does this applies to Tahiyyat-Al-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque)?

A: There is a difference among scholars concerning this issue. However, the correct view is that it is permissible and even recommended because Eclipse Prayer and Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid are among the prayer that have reasons to be performed.

The correct opinion is the validity of offering prayers of reasons in the time of the afternoon and after sunrise like other times. This is based on the general meaning of the Prophet's saying, (Verily, the sun and the moon are two signs among the signs of Allah. They do not eclipse on account of the death of anyone or on account of the birth of anyone. So when you see them (in a state of eclipse), supplicate Allah and observe the Prayer till it is cleared from you.) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: (When anyone among you enters the Masjid (mosque), he should not sit till he offers two Rak`ahs.) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

This ruling applies to the two Rak`ahs of Tawaf (circumambulation) around the Ka`bah if one performed Tawaf after sunrise or in the time of afternoon according to the Prophet's saying, ﴾O Banu `Abd Manaf, do not prevent any person that wants to offer Tawaf (circumambulation) around this Al-Bayt (the House: another name for the Ka`bah) or perform Prayer (therein) at any time, day or night.﴿ (Narrated by Imam Ahmad and the four Compilers of Sunan (Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) with an authentic Isnad (chain of narrators) on the authority of Jubayr Ibn Mut`im (may Allah be pleased with him)).

Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse) is not to be repeated

even if the Kusuf has not cleared away

Q: Does the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (If you see that, then pray and make Du`a' (supplication) until it is over") **include both things: offering Salah and making Du`a', so if they made Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) and the Kusuf is not clear, they should prolong Du`a' until the Kusuf clears away or does it mean to just offer Salah and if they made Taslim and the Kusuf is not clear, they do not have to repeat Salah?**

A: The Salah is not to be repeated; it is prescribed for Muslims to frequently observe Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah), Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah), Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"), Sadaqah (voluntary charity) and emancipation, for the Messenger (peace be upon him) ordered the Ummah (nation based on one creed) to do so in case of Kusuf.

Khutbah after Salat-ul-Kusuf is Sunnah

Q: Is delivering a Khutbah (sermon) after Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse) considered an act of Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet)?

A: It is an act of Sunnah to make Khutbah after offering Salat-ul-Kusuf, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴿Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) you have a good example to follow﴾ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿"So whoever turns away from my Sunnah does not belong to me."﴾ This serves the public interest of Muslims, helps them understand their religion and warns them against invoking Allah's Anger and Punishment. It is sufficient to do so after concluding Salah. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on offering Salat-ul-Kusuf during earthquakes and the like

Q: Is it prescribed to offer Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse) when witnessing Allah's Signs such as earthquakes, thunderbolts, heavy storms, the whiteness of the night and the blackness of the day, volcanoes, etc.?

A: I know of no reliable evidence to permit offering Salah upon the occurrence of earthquakes and the like. The Sahih (authentic) Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) indicates offering Salah, Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah), Du`a' (supplication) and Sadaqah (voluntary charity) at the time of a solar eclipse. Some scholars hold the view that it is permissible to offer Salat-ul-Kusuf at the occurrence of earthquakes, but I know of no text reported from the Messenger to this effect, but this is reported from Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them). According to the Shari`ah (Islamic law) evidences, acts of `Ibadah (worship) are Tawqifiy (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion), that only what is indicated by the Book and Sunnah is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who innovates things in our affairs for which there is no valid (reason) (commits sin) and these are to be rejected.﴿ [Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her)]. Muslim also reported the Hadith in his Sahih Book of Hadith on her authority (may Allah be pleased with her) in this wording: ﴾He who

does an act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected.﴿ It means that it is to be rejected from whoever innovates it and it is not permissible to do it or attribute it to the Shari`ah of Muhammad (peace be upon him). May Allah grant us success!

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Salat-ul-Istisqa

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Comment on a symposium on Salat-ul-Istisqa'

Praise be to Allah, Alone. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his Companions, and those who follow his guidance!

We have listened in this blessed symposium to the speeches delivered by Sheikh Salih Al-Atram, Sheikh `Abdul-Rahman Al-Barrak, and Sheikh `Abdul-`Aziz Al-Rajihy on Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain) and its etiquettes. They also mentioned that rain fell heavily in valleys and abundant good took place. I ask Allah to benefit the Muslims by it, make it a blessing, spread it throughout the Muslim lands, send blessed rain to others, rectify our hearts and deeds, protect us from the evil of our souls and the evil consequences of our deeds.

The Sheikhs have fully explained the manner of offering Salat-ul-Istisqa'. It is Mashru` (Islamically prescribed) to offer Salat-ul-Istisqa' as did the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is also called Salat-ul-Istighathah (Prayer for seeking help). As the Sheikhs have mentioned, it is to be offered when necessary in times of drought, insufficient rainfall, loss of water, and the dryness of rivers.

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Muslims turn to their Lord (Glorified and Exalted be He) particularly in such situations, although they should turn to His Mercy at all times as all bounties are from Him. Allah (Glorified be He) states, ﴾And whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from Allâh.﴿

Salat-ul-Istisqa' is a great form of `Ibadah (worship) by which Muslims express their frailty and submissiveness to their Lord (Glorified and Exalted be He) and their dire need for His Mercy and Benevolence. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) loves His servants to show their need for Him, supplicate to Him, show submission, seek His Mercy, and beseech Him (Glorified and Exalted be He). Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says, ﴾Is not He (better than your gods) Who responds to the distressed one, when he calls on Him, and Who removes the evil﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor).﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Invoke Me, [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islâmic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your (invocation).﴿

He (Glorified be He) loves to be invoked and beseeched. He loves His servants to supplicate, turn and submit to Him.

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Du`a' (supplication) is a form of `Ibadah and a means to draw close to Allah whether they are accepted or not, as mentioned in the symposium. Du`a' includes much good and many benefits. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("Any Muslim who supplicates to Allah in a Du`a' which contains no sin or severing ties of kinship, Allah will give him one of three things: either his Du'a' will be immediately answered, or it will be saved for him in the hereafter, or it will be a means of warding off an equivalent amount of evil (from him)". The Companions said "...so we will ask for more." He replied, "Allah is most (generous).") A man may invoke Allah and his Du`a' may not be answered immediately for a wise reason; to make him submit and supplicate to Allah more and express his need for Him wherein is great good; a person may be guided, his heart and deeds may be rectified, and he may be drawn close to Allah due to his need; a person may be negligent and when a calamity such as loss of wealth, disease, or oppression by enemies befalls him, he resorts to Allah, supplicates and submits to Him. Hence, Allah makes him find pleasure in drawing closer and submitting to Him. His calamity may be a reason for his guidance, uprightness of his heart, and drawing close to Allah rather than being astray. He becomes one of those who turn to Allah

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and submit to Him (Glorified and Exalted be He). Supplications bring innumerable benefits. If they are answered immediately, the servant should thank his Lord (Glorified and Exalted be He) and turn to Him in repentance. If the answer is delayed, this may be due to the sins and mistakes which a person has committed, thus, they should repent to Allah, rectify their affairs, enjoin what is good and forbid evil so that these sins are replaced with good deeds. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, (And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much. (See the Qur'ân Verse 35:45).) Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: (Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allâh, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself.)

Allah (Glorified be He) states, (Evil (sins and disobedience to Allâh) has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression and evil deeds), that He (Allâh) may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return (by repenting to Allâh, and begging His Pardon).)

We should thank Allah for His Bounties.

We should turn to Allah in times of adversity and prosperity. In times of adversity, man should consider the reasons that have led to difficulties.

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Whether the difficulties afflict people in general or the individual in particular, each should take account of himself, repent, and return to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) so that He might remove the hardship, disease, loss of wealth, and oppression by enemies, and guide the noisy wife and children and the unfriendly neighbors, etc. A person should turn and resort to Allah and repent of all sins and mistakes asking Him for guidance and to pardon and forgive him. This is along with holding self accountable and compelling his self to obey Allah, abstain from His prohibitions, give Allah His due rights, and strive against his soul, as the soul is inclined to evil. Rulers should consider these reasons as well, for they may be the cause of these afflictions. They should consider their obligations and duties and weigh them against their deeds so that their affairs will be set right in a way that

pleases Allah and brings people closer to Him.

The rich should care for paying Zakah (obligatory charity) and abiding by the rights of Allah. All people, rich or poor, or the government should call themselves to account so they remain on the right path, perform the rights of Allah, and rectify their affairs in times of

adversity and prosperity, hardship and ease, and under all conditions. In times of adversity and hardship, people should call themselves to account and repent in order to bring benefit to all people. They should give charity for the poor and the needy, show mercy, kindness, and leniency to them, for Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) is Merciful to those who show mercy to others. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy.") and ("The Merciful shows mercy to those who show mercy. Show mercy to those on Earth and the One Who is in Heaven will show mercy to you.") If people hasten to repent, regret their evil deeds, refrain from committing misdeeds, strive against their souls, show mercy to the poor and the needy; and the governments on the other hand improve the affairs of the citizens; the rich and the poor, Allah will remove their hardships and replace it with what benefits them. Allah is the Most Generous and Most Kind. He (Glorified be He) states, (Verily, Allâh will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allâh). But when Allâh wills a people's punishment, there can be no turning back of it, and they will find besides Him no protector.) If people refrain from committing sins and evil deeds and

sincerely repent and perform good deeds, Allah will change their state of distress, corruption, and division and will unite them in Truth, bestow blessings upon them, send down rain, rectify their affairs, and protect them from their enemies. This is in addition to other blessings that will be granted to them, if they refrain from committing sins and conduct themselves in a manner that pleases Him (Glorified and Exalted be He). If people obey Allah and follow the right path then they commit evil and sins, Allah will punish them. He may postpone the punishment out of His infinite wisdom. Allah (Glorified be He) states, (Consider not that Allâh is unaware of that which the Zâlimûn (polytheists, wrong-doers) do, but He gives them respite up to a Day when the eyes will stare in horror.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("Allah gives respite to the oppressor, but when He overtakes him, He never releases him.") He, then, recited Allah's statement, (Such is the Seizure of your Lord when He seizes the (population of) the towns while they are doing wrong. Verily, His Seizure is painful, (and) severe.) Allah (Glorified be He) may postpone punishment and grant them respite, then he takes them by surprise. There is neither might nor power except with Allah!

Allah may grant them respite till the Day of Resurrection and they will continue enjoying bounties as do the Christians, the Jews, and others. They will be granted many blessings that ultimately lead to their destruction and will die in the worst condition. Hence, they will be punished severely. Some of the ignorant may be deceived by the blessings which are granted to disbelievers; however, no thinking person should be deceived by this for Allah grants respite to them and then tries them suddenly with earthquakes, wars, and the like. He may also postpone their punishment until their death to punish them even more severely. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, ﴾Let not the free disposal (and affluence) of the disbelievers throughout the land deceive you.﴿ ﴾A brief enjoyment; then, their ultimate abode is Hell; and worst indeed is that place for rest.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Then leave Me Alone with such as belie this Qur'ân. We shall punish them gradually from directions they perceive not.﴿ ﴾And I will grant them a respite. Verily, My Plan is strong.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Consider not that Allâh is unaware of that which the Zâlimûn (polytheists, wrong-doers) do, but He gives them respite up to a Day when the eyes will stare in horror.﴿ Man should not be deceived by the conditions of the enemies of Allah, for He may grant them many blessings so they increase in sinfulness.

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Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾And let not the disbelievers think that Our postponing of their punishment is good for them. We postpone the punishment only so that they may increase in sinfulness. And for them is a disgracing torment.﴿ We ask Allah to keep us safe! Allah grants them respite and they increase in sin and receive a disgraceful torment. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, ﴾So, when they forgot (the warning) with which they had been reminded, We opened for them the gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given, all of a sudden, We took them (in punishment), and lo! They were plunged into destruction with deep regrets and sorrows.﴿ i.e. lose hope in every good thing. A Muslim should not be deceived by blessings such as rivers, rain, gardens, and industries which were granted to the disbelievers. Allah will progressively lead them to destruction according to His perfect wisdom. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) is Most Forbearing, All-Wise and has determined wisely when to mete out punishment and when to delay it. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, ﴾Such is the Seizure of your Lord when He seizes the (population of) the towns while they are doing wrong. Verily, His Seizure is painful, (and) severe.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("Allah gives respite to the oppressor, but when He seizes, He never releases him.") He then recited Allah's statement,

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﴾Such is the Seizure of your Lord when He seizes the (population of) the towns while they are doing wrong. Verily, His Seizure is painful, (and) severe.﴿ The punishment may come immediately as mentioned in the another Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("There is no sin that Allah is more likely to hasten the punishment of for the one who commits it in this world, in addition to what He stores up for them in the Hereafter, than oppression and severing the ties of kinship.") Allah may punish the oppressor and those who sever ties of kinship immediately because of their heinous crimes. He may give respite to disbelievers and sinners as part of His perfect plan which none but He knows. Therefore, a wise person must beware of the punishment and wrath of Allah, hold himself accountable and should not be deceived by the disbelievers and the sinners who are granted respite, for Allah is All-Wise and All-Knowing. He has determined wisely when to grant respite and when to punish.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer Salat-ul-Istisqa' during times of severe drought. He (peace be upon him) appointed a day for the people to gather and offer Salat-ul-Istisqa'. On this day, he (peace be upon him) came out when the rim of the sun appeared. He led people in Salah, delivered a sermon, supplicated to Allah and turned his outer garment backwards. He was optimistic and hoped that Allah would

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change the adversity to prosperity. According to the Hadith Mursal (a Hadith with no Companion of the Prophet in the chain of narration) which was narrated on the authority of Abu Ja`far Al-Baqir, the Prophet (peace be upon him) turned his outer garment around when offering Salat-ul-Istisqa' so that the drought would end. The Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated to Allah much, delivered a sermon, and recited Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah), Allah answered his supplications by bringing a cloud and rain fell immediately by Allah' Grace and Mercy. This was to let people see that Allah's Mercy is near, to confirm the truthfulness of his (peace be upon him) message, and that he was truly the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) who supplicated to Allah and was immediately answered. It rained at once when he (peace be upon him) supplicated to Allah in the morning and on Friday as he delivered his sermon. It was authentically reported that: ﴾A Bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Our means of livelihood is destroyed and we have no means for survival. Please pray to Allah for rain." Hence, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) raised his hands and prayed, 'O Allah! Bless us with rain. O Allah! Bless us with rain." Allah sent clouds and it rained from the time he was at the Masjid and on their way back to their homes. The rain continued till the following Friday causing valleys and hillocks to flow with water. News of rainfall spread everywhere. The next Friday, the same Bedouin, or someone else, said to the Prophet (peace be upon him) while he was delivering the sermon, "O Messenger of Allah! Our means of livelihood is destroyed and our roads are blocked off; please supplicate to Allah to withhold the rain." The Prophet (peace be upon him) smiled at

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the weakness of Bani Adam (human beings), for initially they asked for rain and the following Friday they asked him to supplicate that Allah would withhold it. The Prophet raised his hands and said: "O Allah! Let the rain fall around us and not upon us. O Allah! Pour it down on the pastures, hills, valleys and on the roots of trees"﴿ Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), the narrator of the Hadith, said, "The rain stopped and they went out walking in the sunshine."

This is out of His Bounty. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, ﴾Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!" - and it is!﴿ This is a sign of His great power and a proof that He has power over all things, for when he intends a thing, He just says to it : "Be!" - and it is. This also confirms the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allah and that he is truly the Messenger whom Allah immediately answered his supplication and it rained; then He withheld it and this is an expression of His Mercy (Glorified and Exalted be He). Muslims should emulate their Prophet (peace be upon him) and supplicate for rain when necessary. They should continue their supplication until it rains, for Du`a' is all good and expresses submission to Allah.

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If it does not rain immediately, it is for a divine reason which only Allah knows. This perhaps might lead them to repent and turn to Allah, increase their good deeds and acts of obedience, and ponder over the reasons for the delayed answer to their supplications. Hence, they will bring themselves to account, return, and repent to Allah, and set their affairs aright. Allah (Glorified be He) states,

﴾Certainly your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) is Wise in all His statements and His actions. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered a sermon before offering Salat-ul-Istisqa' and other Hadith indicate that he (peace be upon him) delivered a sermon after Salah. It is narrated on the authority of `Abdullah Ibn Zayd and Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated for rain and delivered a sermon after Salah. Ibn `Abbas narrated a Hadith that indicate that it was in the same form as Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer).

It is authentically reported on the authority of `Abdullah Ibn Zayd and `Aishah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered a sermon before offering prayer. Both views are authentically proven and can be applied, thanks to Allah. It is permissible to deliver a sermon and then offer Salah and vice versa.

The matter is flexible and whoever compares it to Salat-ul-`Eid as Ibn `Abbas who said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered it in the same manner of Salat-ul-`Eid has applied the Sunnah. It is also in accordance with one of the two Hadith narrated on the authority of `Abdullah Ibn Zayd in this regard and the Hadith narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that he (peace be upon him) delivered a sermon after offering Salah.

It is also permissible to deliver the sermon before Salah in accordance to the Hadith narrated on the authority of `Abdullah Ibn Zayd and recorded in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) and the Hadith narrated on the authority of `Aishah. Both views are in accordance with the Sunnah and are sound, Praise be to Allah.

It is very important to have sincere hearts and to supplicate Allah humbly. People should gather to pray Salat-ul-Istisqa' with attentive hearts, showing repentance, and return to Allah refraining from sins hoping for His Mercy and fearing His punishment. People should supplicate to Allah much, seek his forgiveness, and repent to Him. They should wear their ordinary clothes, not new ones such as for Salat-ul-`Eid, as they come out to humbly ask Allah for help. Each one should supplicate to Allah on his way to the Masjid, while sitting in the Masjid, and when saying Amen as the Imam supplicates. A person should hope for the Mercy of Allah

and seek His Blessings. The rulers, the rich, and all people should repent to Allah sincerely, rectify their affairs, refrain from committing sins, repent to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) of all sins, establish the commands of Allah on His Earth, enjoin the good and forbid evil. It is Mustahab (desirable) for a Muslim to recite after rain fall: ﴾"Allahumma Sayyiban nafi`an, Mutirna bifadli Allahi wa-rahmatihi (Oh Allah! Provide us with beneficial abundant rain. We are granted rain by Allah's Bounty and Mercy)."﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught his Ummah (nation) to recite this Du`a' when it rains. It is not permissible to say that the rainfall was due to this star or that calculation of this one or that was correct. It is worth mentioning that stars do not affect rainfall whether they gather or separate, appear or eclipse. The motion of the stars depends on Allah's Will. Thus, it is not permissible to say that our rainfall was due to this and that, or such and such. All this has no basis and the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that this belief is Kufr (disbelief). It is Wajib upon Muslims to be careful in this regard.

It is also Mustahab for a Muslim to uncover part from his body when it rains so that it touches his body

as did the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the authentically reported Hadith recorded by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) book of Hadith on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him): (It rained upon us as we were with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). The Messenger of Allah pulled back his garment (from a part of his body) till the rain fell on it. We said, "O Messenger of Allah! Why did you do this?" He replied, "It is because it (the rainfall) has just come from the Exalted Lord.") This indicate that it is desirable for a person to uncover part of his body such as his arm or head so that rain touches it as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did.

It is Mashru` for a Muslim to take off his turban or to uncover his arm, leg, or any part of his body which is permissible to reveal before people so that the rain can touch it.

May Allah help us all to acquire beneficial knowledge and perform righteous deeds. May He grant you, all Muslims, and us increased knowledge and success! May He double our reward. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

Permissibility of offering Salat-ul-Istisqa' for others

Q: Brother S.`A.S. from Buraydah says: When a decree is issued to offer Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain) while some in the countryside are experiencing rainstorms. Should those not directly effected offer Salat-ul-Istisqa' or should they perform Salah as usual and supplicate for the others? Please, advise us! May Allah reward you!

A: It is permissible for them to perform Salat-ul-Istisqa' in compliance with the orders of the ruler. They should ask Allah to help them, remove their hardships, and bestow His mercy on them. This is because all Muslims are one body. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("One believer to another is like the parts of a building, each supporting the other." He (peace be upon him) interlaced his fingers.") The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ("The similitude of believers in regard to their mutual love, affection, and empathy is that of a body. When any of its parts aches, the whole body aches due to sleeplessness and fever.") May Allah grant us success!

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Ruling on Salat-ul-Istisqa' for a traveler

Q: Brother `A.M.M. from Tabuk inquires: Should a traveler perform Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain)? Kindly, advise. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is prescribed for residents and travelers to offer Salat-ul-Istisqa' if they need to, acting upon the Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet). He (peace be upon him) used to offer Salat-ul-Istisqa' at times of drought and ask Allah to rescue Muslims. So if the Bedouins are in need of help, it is permissible for them to offer Salat-ul-Istisqa'. Similarly, if the travelers are in need of water, it is permissible for them to seek Allah's Help. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴿Invoke Me, [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islâmic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your (invocation).﴾ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴿And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor).﴾ He (Glorified be He) also says: ﴿Is not He (better than your gods) Who responds to the distressed one, when he calls on Him, and Who removes the evil﴾ However, if they seek Allah's Help and invoke Him without offering Salah,

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it is Ok, for it is permissible for Muslims to invoke their Lord and draw close to Him by obeying Him. He (Glorified be He) should be invoked and asked, He is the Most-Generous, the All-Bountiful, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, Who gives and withholds with wisdom. He has power over all things. He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while all people will be questioned. It is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) for all people to ask Allah for what they need and to draw close to Him with the acts that He likes such as Salah (Prayer), Du`a' (supplication), Sadaqah (voluntary charity), etc. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on Tasmiyah in each Rak`ah

of Salat-ul-Istisqa' and what is to be said in between the two Sujuds

Q: Is it permissible to recite the Tasmiyah (saying, "Bismillah [In the Name of Allah]") in each Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) of Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain)? What is prescribed to be said in between the two Sujuds (prostrations)?

A: What is prescribed is to recite the Tasmiyah in each Rak`ah before reciting Al-Fatihah or any other Surah (Qur'anic chapter) except for Surah Al-Tawbah. Before reciting Al-Fatihah, the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) has to mention the Tasmiyah. In the first Rak`ah, he should mention the Isti`adhah (saying: "A`udhu-Billahi mina Al-Shaytan -ir-Rajim [I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan]")

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then the Tasmiyah, while in the next Rak`ahs, it is not obligatory to mention the Isti`adhah, if one mentions it, it is acceptable, and if they just mention the Tasmiyah, it is sufficient. With regard to what is said between the two Sujuds, one should ask Allah's Forgiveness saying: "Rabbi ighfir li, Rabbi ighfir li, allahumma ighfirli warhamni wahdini wajburni warzuqni wa`afini (O Allah! Forgive me, O Allah! Forgive me, O Allah! Forgive me, have mercy on me, guide me, console me, provide me with sustenance and grant me good health)." It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say this between the two Sujuds. It is obligatory to say this once, but if one repeats it three times or more, it is better. There is no difference in saying this in the Faridah Salah (obligatory prayer), Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer), Salat-ul-Istisqa' and other Nafilah (supererogatory) Salahs.

Encouragement to Fear Allah

and keep away from sins and disobedience

From `Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah Ibn Baz to all Muslims, may Allah provide me and them to do the good and guide us to repent sincerely from all sins and mischief, Amen. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

You know, may Allah forgive me and you, what happened when rain was delayed in many countries and the dire need of Muslims for Allah's Mercy, His Virtue and Blessings. Allah (May He be Exalted) commanded them to supplicate Him and pray to Him to fulfill their needs. Allah (Exalted be He) promised them to respond as He says ﴾And your Lord said: "Invoke Me, [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islâmic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your (invocation). Verily! Those who scorn My worship [i.e. do not invoke Me, and do not believe in My Oneness, (Islâmic Monotheism)] they will surely enter Hell in humiliation!"﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He likes not the aggressors.﴿ ﴾And do not do mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order, and invoke Him with fear and hope. Surely, Allâh's Mercy is (ever) near unto the good-doers.﴿

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims faced any hardship, they turned to Allah (Exalted be He), and supplicated Him and Allah (Exalted be He) responded to them and bestowed His blessings and bounty on them. Allah (Exalted be He) says concerning the Battle of Badr: ﴾(Remember) when you sought help of your Lord and He answered you (saying): "I will help you with a thousand of the angels each behind the other (following one another) in succession."﴿

When it became very dry in Madinah and in the nearby areas, the Muslims asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to supplicate Allah; the Prophet (peace be upon him) raised his hands in Jumu'ah Khutbah (sermon), supplicated his Lord, repeated his supplications and took the people again to the desert and led them in a prayer of two units similar to 'Eid prayer. He supplicated his Lord, prayed to him raised his hands, persisted in his prayer, turned round his garment and the Muslims raised up

their hands imitating the Prophet (peace be upon him), so Allah (Exalted be He) sent them His Assistance, provided them with His Mercy, lifted their hardship and made much rain shower on them.

Allah (May He be exalted) says, ﴾Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for (the Meeting with) Allâh and the Last Day, and remembers Allâh much.﴿

One of the strongest reasons to be endowed with mercy and to bring forth rain Is to fear Allah (Exalted be He), repent to Him from all sins, enjoin what is good, forbid what is bad, cooperate to do good and to be pious, advise one another for Allah's sake and be patient in this regard, to have mercy on the poor and the wretched and to console and do good to them. Allah (Exalted be He) says, ﴾And if the people of the towns had believed and had the Taqwâ (piety), certainly, We should have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth﴿ Also, Allah (Exalted be He) says, ﴾And whosoever fears Allâh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty).﴿ ﴾And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine.﴿ Allah (Exalted be He) also says, ﴾and whosoever fears Allâh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Surely, Allâh's Mercy is (ever) near unto the good-doers.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾The believers, men and women, are Auliyâ' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma'rûf (i.e. Islâmic Monotheism and all that Islâm orders one to do), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islâm has forbidden); they perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give the Zakât, and obey Allâh and His Messenger. Allâh will have His Mercy on them. Surely Allâh is All-Mighty, All-Wise.﴿

In these Noble Verses, Allah (Exalted be He) points out that piety and having a kind attitude to the Servants of Allah and to hold fast to Allah's Path is one of the causes

that makes Allah bestow His Mercy and bounty on them, send down rain and remove their hardships. So, fear Allah, O Servants of Allah, be good to Allah's Servants, advise one another and be patient in this regard, cooperate to do what is good and be pious, forbid what is bad and repent to Allah from all your sins so that your Lord (May He be Exalted) may forgive you, bestow on you blessed rain, give you what you like, and keep you away from what you dislike. Allah (Exalted be He) says, ﴾And all of you beg Allâh to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾"Whoever is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully."﴿ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾The Compassionate One has mercy on those who are merciful. If you show mercy to those who are on the earth, He Who is in the heaven will show mercy to you.﴿

There are many known Verses and Hadiths urging people to piety and to hold fast to it, to have mercy on Allah's Servants and to do good to them.

I ask Allah to improve the condition of all Muslims and to

Grant them sincere repentance from all sins, shower them with His Virtue, gather their hearts on piety and good work, protect all the people from their evils, bad deeds and misleading tests. May

Allah make His Religion victorious, make His Word High, guide those in charge to the best for their countries and people, grant them good counselors and help them do everything that is good! Allah is the Only One who is able to do that.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

The General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Chairman of the Council of Senior Scholars and the Department of Scholarly Researches and Ifta'

`Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah ibn Baz

Advice on the Day of Salat-ul-Istighatha

Praise be to Allah, Alone. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon His Messenger, his family, and his Companions!

Muslims in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are set to offer Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain) on Monday, Shawwal 27th, 1386 A.H., so I decided to draw the attention of my fellow Muslim brothers to some matters which every Muslim should be aware of. Muslims should call themselves to account, strive to purify their souls, gain salvation, do what pleases Allah and protects them from anything harmful in this life and the Hereafter. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, ﴾O you who believe! Fear Allâh and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allâh. Verily, Allâh is All-Aware of what you do.﴿ ﴾And be not like those who forgot Allâh (i.e. became disobedient to Allâh), and He caused them to forget their ownselves, (let them to forget to do righteous deeds). Those are the Fâsiqûn (rebellious, disobedient to Allâh).﴿ In this Noble Ayah (Qur'anic verse), Allah orders believers to fear Him and consider the deeds they will bring on the Day of Resurrection in order to hold fast to what

benefits them and pleases Allah (Exalted be He), and beware of the deeds which incur Allah's displeasure. This is the great benefit of taking into account the deeds that a servant sends forth for the Day of Resurrection. Allah (Glorified be He) has clarified that He is well-acquainted with the action of His servants as no secret is hidden from Him that they might fear Him and rectify their inner and outer deeds. He repeatedly enjoins Taqwa (fearing Allah as He should be feared) as it is the only means to one's happiness and well-being.

Taqwa is to obey Allah and His Messenger and to refrain from whatever Allah and His Messenger prohibited out of devotion and sincere belief in Him, His Messenger, and the message of Allah which His Messenger (peace be upon him) conveyed in order to attain the reward of Allah and avoid His punishment. In their explanation of the meaning of Taqwa, some of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) said, "Taqwa is that you act in obedience to Allah, and hope in His Mercy upon a light from Him; and to abandon acts of disobedience out of fear of Allah, upon a light from Him."

The great Companion and scholar, `Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) explained the meaning of Taqwa saying, "The optimal Taqwa is obey Allah and never disobey Him; remember Allah at all times, and never forget Him; and to thank Allah and never show ingratitude."

In the previous Ayah, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) admonishes His servants against forgetting and turning away from Him; resulting in His forgetting them. They turned away from the means of their salvation and

happiness in this life and the Hereafter. Allah (Exalted be He) states, ﴾And be not like those who

forgot Allâh (i.e. became disobedient to Allâh), and He caused them to forget their ownselves, (let them to forget to do righteous deeds).》 Allah described those who turned away and disobeyed Him as disobedient, following their whims and the insinuations of Satan.

Every Muslim must fear Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and follow His orders . They should not follow their whims and the insinuations of Satan. They should avoid imitating the enemies of Allah and His Messenger who turn away from remembering and obeying Allah. That is to attain salvation and well-being in this life and in the Hereafter.

Allah (Glorified be He) has informed us in many parts of His Noble Book that all afflictions that befall man such as hard-heartedness, drought, loss of wealth, lives, crops, domination of the enemy, and all other afflictions are due to the sins which the people commit. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, 《And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much. (See the Qur'ân Verse 35:45).》 Allah (Exalted be He) also says: 《Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allâh, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself.》

Allah (Exalted be He) states, 《Evil (sins and disobedience to Allâh) has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression and evil deeds), that He (Allâh) may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return (by repenting to Allâh, and begging His Pardon).》 Allah (Exalted be He) also says: 《And indeed We punished the people of Fir'aun (Pharaoh) with years of drought and shortness of fruits (crops), that they might remember (take heed).》 After mentioning the tyrannical nations and their punishment, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) said, 《So We punished each (of them) for his sins; of them were some on whom We sent Hâsib (a violent wind with shower of stones) [as on the people of Lût (Lot)], and of them were some who were overtaken by As-Saihah [torment - awful cry. (as Thamûd or Shu'aib's people)], and of them were some whom We caused the earth to swallow [as Qârûn (Korah)], and of them were some whom We drowned [as the people of Nûh (Noah), or Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and his people]. It was not Allâh Who wronged them, but they wronged themselves.》 He informed us about the People of Nuh who disobeyed their Messenger; Nuh (Noah, peace be upon him), 《Because of their sins they were drowned, then were made to enter the Fire. And they found none to help them instead of Allâh.》 i.e. they drowned and in the Hereafter they will enter Hellfire because of their sins.

We seek refuge with Allah from their fate!

These Noble Ayahs as well as the other Ayahs and Hadith to the same effect indicate that all afflictions and ordeals that servants suffer from and which only Allah knows, are the result of their mistakes and sins, and the deeds which

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contradict the Truth so that they might receive admonition and thus repent to Allah, obey Him, and refrain from whatever He has prohibited. This is why Allah states in the previous Ayah: ﴾that He (Allâh) may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return (by repenting to Allâh, and begging His Pardon).﴿ i.e. Allah (Glorified be He) will punish his servants for some of their sins so they would return to Allah and repent from their sins. If Allah were to punish the people according their sins, they would be destroyed. Allah (Glorified be He) states, ﴾And if Allâh were to punish men for that which they earned, He would not leave a moving (living) creature on the surface of the earth﴿ and ﴾And indeed We punished the people of Fir'aun (Pharaoh) with years of drought and shortness of fruits (crops), that they might remember (take heed).﴿ i.e. Allah punished the people of Fir'aun with drought and the scarcity of crops so they would realize their evil deeds, repent to Allah, obey Him, and become steadfast on the Commands of Allah. Thus, He would improve their condition, fill their hearts with Taqwa, send rain, and bestow blessings upon them. Allah (Exalted be He) states, ﴾And if the people of the towns had believed and had the Taqwâ (piety), certainly, We should have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth﴿ .

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Allah (Glorified be He) also states, ﴾And if only they had acted according to the Taurât (Torah), the Injeel (Gospel), and what has (now) been sent down to them from their Lord (the Qur'ân), they would surely have gotten provision from above them and from underneath their feet.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth.﴿ ﴾He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾And whosoever fears Allâh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty).﴿ ﴾And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine.﴿ He also says, ﴾and whosoever fears Allâh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Verily, We sent (Messengers) to many nations before you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم). And We seized them with extreme poverty (or loss in wealth) and loss in health (with calamities) so that they might humble themselves (believe with humility).﴿ ﴾When Our Torment reached them, why then did they not humble themselves (believe with humility)? But their hearts became hardened, and Shaitân (Satan) made fair-seeming to them that which they used to do.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾If they (non-Muslims) had believed in Allâh, and went on the Right Way (i.e. Islâm) We would surely have bestowed on them water (rain) in abundance.﴿ ﴾That We might try them thereby. And whosoever turns away from the Reminder of his Lord (i.e. this Qur'ân, - and practise not its laws and orders), He will cause him to enter in a severe torment (i.e. Hell).﴿ In these Noble Ayahs, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) promises that if servants believe in Him, obey His Commands, fear Him as He should be feared, and supplicate to Him sincerely in times of trials and tribulations, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He)

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will grant them whatever they have asked, protect them aganist whatever they fear, forgive them their sins, remove their hardships, and send them rain and blessings.

O Muslims! You should fear Allah and hasten to seek His pleasure. You should strive against your souls for the sake of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and force yourselves to sincerely repent for all your sins. You should fight against your whims, Satan, and the evil of your soul. Prepare yourself for the Hereafter and supplicate to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) often and seek His forgiveness. Thus, He will set right your affairs, facilitate your matters, suffice you out of His bounty, remove your adversities, protect you from the plots of your enemies, and save you from punishment in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, ﴾As for those who strive hard in Us (Our Cause), We will surely guide them to Our Paths (i.e. Allâh's religion - Islâmic Monotheism). And verily, Allâh is with the Muhsinûn (good doers)."﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Allâh has promised those among you who believe and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the land, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practise their religion which He has chosen for them (i.e. Islâm). And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear (provided) they (believers) worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with Me.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾But if you remain patient and become Al-Muttaqûn [the pious - See V.2:2], not the least harm will their cunning do to you. Surely, Allâh surrounds all that they do.﴿

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states, ﴾Verily, for the Muttaqûn (the pious - See V.2:2) are Gardens of delight (Paradise) with their Lord.﴿ Having mercy on the poor and the needy people and showing kindness to them is one of the good deeds which should be done nowadays and always. Sadaqah (charity) is one of the best deeds that repels evil and brings mercy. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) stated, ﴾and do good. Truly, Allâh loves Al-Muhsinûn (the good-doers).﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Surely, Allâh's Mercy is (ever) near unto the good-doers.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾but if you remit it by way of charity, that is better for you if you did but know.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Believe in Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and spend of that whereof He has made you trustees. And such of you as believe and spend (in Allâh's Way), theirs will be a great reward.﴿ It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾"Sadaqah and Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night) extinguish (the fire of sin) just as water extinguishes Hellfire." The Prophet (peace be upon him) then recited the following Ayah: ﴾Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (in charity in Allâh's Cause) out of what We have bestowed on them.﴿ ﴾No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do.﴿ ﴿

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾"The Merciful shows mercy to those who show mercy. Show mercy to those on Earth and the One Who is in Heaven will show mercy to you."﴿ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾"Anyone who does not show mercy, will not be shown mercy."﴿

May Allah set right the affairs of all Muslims, fill their hearts with Taqwa, and guide their rulers! May Allah bestow on us sincere Tawbah (repentance to Allah) for all our sins and help us follow His

Shari`ah (Islamic law). I ask Him to protect all Muslims from the plots of their enemies. He is Able to do all things. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon His servant and Messenger Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

Turning one's garment backwards should be during

the sermon when the Imam inverts his garment

Q: Brother `A.`A. from Al-Khubar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia says, "I observed one of the students of knowledge in a Masjid (mosque) wearing his garment backwards before offering Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain). After prayer I asked him why he had done so, for I know that one should turn one's garment backwards after concluding the prayer and sermon. He replied that there is no harm in this and that he turned it backwards before offering prayer so that when he turned it again it would be on the right side." What is the opinion of Your Eminence regarding what he did? Kindly reply, may Allah reward you!

A: The explicit meanings of the Hadiths of the Prophet concerning Salat-ul-Istisqa' indicate that garments should be worn as usual and then inverted during the sermon when the Imam (leader in congregational prayer) does so.

As for doing so prior to offering the prayer,

it is apparently impermissible and is contradictory to the Sunnah. May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on turning a cloak inside out for woman

during the Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain)

Q: What is the ruling on turning a woman's cloak inside out during Salat-ul-Istisqa'? Do they take the same ruling of men or is it not permissible for them to turn them? It is worth mentioning that when they turn their cloaks, their bodies are uncovered. Could you kindly advise. May Allah reward you!

A: If women are uncovered when they turn their cloaks in Salat-ul-Istisqa' while men are looking, they may not do so because turning the cloak inside out is a Sunnah and uncovering before men is a Fitnah (sedition) and is prohibited. If they are not uncovered, they take the same ruling as men because this is the basic rule. They are equal to men in applying the rulings unless otherwise is substantiated by the evidence.

The ruling on performing Salat-ul-Istisqa'

if the ruler does not give orders to perform it

Q: If the ruler of a country leaves the Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) of offering Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain) and does not call people to offer it when there is lack of rain or when the wells run dry, is it permissible for the Imam (leader in congregational prayer) of a Masjid (mosque) in the country to urge people in his area to gather and perform Salat-ul-Istisqa' by themselves?

A: If the ruler of this country does not order the offering of `Id (Feast) Prayer or Salat-ul-Istisqa', it is prescribed for the people to offer these prayer in the desert if possible and, if not, they can offer it in the Masjid (mosque) as legislated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) for his followers. `Eid Prayer is Fard Kifayah (communal obligation) and it is not permissible for Muslims in any place to abandon, because some scholars even considered it Fard `Ayn (individual obligation) similar to Friday Prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) performed it and ordered the people to offer it.

What should the Muslim say upon rainfall and thundering

Q: What should a Muslim do when it rains or when they hear thunder or see lightning?

A: When a Muslim hears thunder, they should say "Subhana man sabbaha al-ra`du bi-hamdihi wal-mala'ikatu min khifatihi i.e. Glory be to Him, Whom the thunder glorifies and praises, and so do the angels because of His Awe." This was reported from Al-Zubayr and some of the Salaf (righteous predecessors). If a believer says that, it is fine.

As for rainfall, a Muslim should say "Allahumma sayban nafi`an. Mutirna bi-fadl-illah warahmatih i.e. O Allah! Let it be beneficial rain. Thanks to Allah's Grace and Mercy, we have it rained." This was reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).

Ascribing the rainfall to the presence of many seas

Q: Geographers ascribe the reason of rainfall to the presence of many seas; is it permissible to use this explanation and be content with it rather than invoking Allah for rain?

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A: Scientists remark that water vapor may result in the accumulation of water in clouds - by the will of Allah - and water could be created in the atmosphere and descend in the form of water by the will of Allah, for He is the All-Able over everything. Allah (He may be Glorified) says: ﴾Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!" - and it is!﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) is the only One who knows what may make the things of His servants best. The accumulation of water - by the will of Allah - may descend because of seas that Allah turns it into sweet water in the atmosphere and then sends it back in the form of clouds to the land which it needs, as He wills. Allah (Exalted be He) may create water in the atmosphere and then clouds and wind carry it to the needy places. This was mentioned by Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah be merciful with him) in His Book "Muftah Dar Al-Sa`adah" (The key to happiness) and others. Our Lord (Glorified be He) is All-Able over everything and All-Knowing of everything. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾It is Allâh Who has created seven heavens and of the earth the like thereof (i.e. seven). His Command descends between them (heavens and earth), that you may know that Allâh has power over all things, and that Allâh surrounds all things in (His) Knowledge.﴿ How Great He (Glorified be He) is! How Powerful He is! It is authentically reported in authentic Hadiths that water has gushed forth from the fingers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) both inside and outside of Madinah.

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Thereupon, people drank and performed ablution with this water. This is one of the greatest signs of Allah (Exalted be He) which indicates His full power, knowledge, mercy, benevolence and the truthfulness of His Messenger (peace be upon him). It will not replace supplicating Allah for rain because supplicating for rain is permissible when necessary; whether the villagers know what the scholars said in this regard or not. That is because Allah (Glorified be He) has legislated it for His servants to use when there is a need in order to ask Him, seek His favor, and know their poverty and need for His Mercy. This happened many times during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he (the Prophet) sought rain with the people during the Friday Khutbah (religious sermon). He also went with the Sahabah (the Prophet's Companions) to the desert at other times and offered Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain). He delivered a Khutbah and instantly Allah (Exalted be He) responded to their supplication. Allah (Exalted be He) supported them at all times wherein they sought His favor as a mercy from Allah (Exalted be He) to His servants and as a support to His Prophet (peace be upon him) in order to show the truthfulness of his message.

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Chapter on Funerals

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Wishing and praying for death is impermissible

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Dear Shaykh `Abdul-`Aziz, **may Allah reward you for answering me! I had sent an inquiry to you and asked you to pray for me at the Ka`bah. At that time, I had offered Salat-ul-Istikharah (prayer for guidance) as to whether to write to you for guidance to the right path and pray for me. However, this time I did not offer Salat-ul-Istikharah, and I have no idea whether you are going to fulfill my request or not. I would like you to supplicate to Allah for me while you are at the Ka`bah to hasten my death. I have been offering this Du`a' (supplication) for four years, but it has not been answered yet. Can you fulfill this request for me? If you are going to do so insha'a Allah (if Allah wills), here is my address so that you can inform me: Taha Hussein Street, Al-Manzalah , Daqahliyyah , Egypt. M.A.A.`A.**

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A: As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

It is impermissible, my brother, to ask for death or wish for it, according to the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ﴾None of you should wish for death because of a calamity which has befallen them. However, if it is unavoidable to wish, let them say, "O Allah, make me live as long as life is better for me and make me die if death is better for me."﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

He (peace be upon him) used to supplicate to Allah saying, ﴾O Allah, who knows Ghayb (the Unseen) and has created the heavens and the earth, keep me alive if it is better for me, and bring death to me if it is better for me.﴿ We recommend that you recite this Du`a', may Allah set right your affairs and ordain for you goodness, righteousness, and good end. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

How to encourage a dying person to utter, "La Ilaha Illa Allah"

Q: How should one encourage a dying person to say "La Ilah Illa Allah" (There is no deity worthy of worship but Allah)?

A: It should be said to the dying person, say "La Ilah Illah Allah" and remember Allah. If he/she does so, this is sufficient and there is no need to annoy him/her to repeat it. Also, if the dying person is being reminded of Allah and merely imitates what he/she hears, then what the dying person utters will suffice. All Praise is due to Allah.

The ruling on reciting Surah-Ya-Sin for a dying person

Q: Is it permissible to recite Surah Ya-Sin (The Qur'an, Surah number 36) for the dying person?

A: Reciting Surah-Ya-Sin for a person while he is in his death bed is mentioned in the Hadith of Ma`qil Ibn Yasar that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾Recite Surah-Ya-Sin over your dying persons.﴿ A group of scholars deemed it as Sahih and thought its Isnad (chain of narrators) is good i.e. reliable, and it is narrated by Abu `Uthman Al-Nahdi on the authority of Ma`qil Ibn Yasar. Other scholars considered it weak stating that the narrator was not Abu `Uthman Al-Nahdi but some unknown person. However, it is known that this Hadith is weak owing to the anonymity of Abu

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`Uthman. Accordingly, it is not recommendable to recite it over a dying person. The scholars who have approved reciting it over people who are about to die have done so thinking that this Hadith is authentic. However, reciting the Qur'an over the sick is a good practice for Allah may benefit the dying person with this, but to specify a Surah (chapter from the Qur'an) such as Surah Ya-Sin is baseless because the Hadith regarding this issue is weak.

Ruling on Talqin (encouraging a dying person to say: "La ilaha illa Allah" i.e. there is no god worthy of worship except Allah) for a disbeliever

Q: Is it permissible to visit an unbeliever who is on his deathbed and urge him to pronounce the two declarations of faith?

A: Whenever possible, it is commendable to do so, for once a young Jewish servant was on his deathbed and the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to him in order to urge him to pronounce the two declarations of faith, saying: (Say, "I testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." The Jewish boy looked at his parents who said to him: "Obey Abu Al-Qasim (i.e. the nickname of the Prophet (peace be upon him))." When the boy declared the Shahadah (Testimony of Faith), the Prophet said, "Praise be to Allah Who saved him, through me, from Hell-fire.")

The ruling on putting a Mus-haf (copy of the Qur'an) on the deceased's stomach

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Q: What is the ruling on putting the Mus-haf (copy of the Qur'an) on the stomach of the deceased?

Answer: This act is not permissible. It is an innovation in Islam.

Q: Sister H.H.H. from Riyadh says, what is the ruling on reading the Qur'an over the deceased and placing the Mus-haf on their abdomens?

A: There is no Sahih (authentic) foundation for reciting the Qur'an over the deceased or over the grave. This is not Mashru` (Islamically acceptable), and is in fact a Bid`ah (innovation in religion). The same is equally applied to putting the Mus-haf on the abdomen of the deceased, as there is no origin for doing so and it is not Mashru`. Rather, scholars recommend placing a piece of iron or a heavy object on the abdomen after death so that it will not swell up.

The ruling on reciting the Qur'an over the dead

Q: I hope Your Honor, Sheikh, will explain the ruling on reading the Qur'an over the dead.

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How authentic are the Hadiths reported in this regard?

A: The act of reading the Qur'an over the dead has no legal foundation in the Shari`ah. It is permissible for a Muslim to read the Qur'an for the living that they may benefit and reflect on the Book of Allah. However, we know of no basis in the Shari`ah that sanctions reading the Qur'an over the dead at his grave, before his burial, or anywhere to give him the reward of the reading. Scholars have written many books on this issue; some scholars held it permissible and encouraged Muslims to read the entire Qur'an many times for the dead, making it analogous to giving charity on behalf of the dead. Other scholars held that these matters are Tawqifiy (bound by an Islamic text and not amenable to personal opinion) i.e. they are acts of worship that a Muslim is not permitted to perform except when approved by the Shari`ah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Whoever performs an act which is not based on our Shari'ah, it is to be rejected.﴿ We do not know any evidence that supports the reading of the Qur'an over the dead. Therefore, we must adhere to the basic ruling i.e. it is an act of worship that should not be performed on behalf of the dead. Unlike giving charity on their behalf, supplicating for them, performing Hajj or `Umrah, or repaying their debts which benefit the dead as Shar`i texts support this. It is authentically narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: unceasing charity, or knowledge by which others benefit,

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or a pious son who prays for him (for the deceased).﴿ Allah (may He be Praised) states: ﴾And those who came after them﴿ i.e. after the Companions, ﴾say: "Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.﴿ Allah (may He be Praised) praised these predecessors for their supplication for those who died before them. This affirms the permissibility of supplicating Allah for the dead Muslims as a rewarded act, and giving charity as stated in the aforementioned Hadith. A Muslim may instead give the poor and the needy the money that would be paid to those hired to read the Qur'an over the deceased. If this money is given in charity on behalf of the deceased, he will benefit from it and the giver will be safe from Bid`ah (innovation in Islam). It is reported in an authentic Hadith: ﴾A person came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, my mother died and did not leave a will. I think she would have asked that we give charity from her wealth, had she been able to speak. Will she be rewarded if I give charity on her behalf? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Yes".﴿ The Messenger (peace be upon him) explained that giving Sadaqah (voluntary charity) or performing Hajj or `Umrah on behalf of the deceased benefits him, as does settling his debts. However, reading the Qur'an to gift its reward to the dead and offering voluntary Salah (prayer) or fasting on their behalf do not benefit

him. The correct opinion is that this is not permissible.

The ruling on applying henna (a plant that produces a reddish-orange dye) to a deceased or dying woman's hands

Q : What is the ruling on applying henna to a deceased or dying woman's hands?

Answer: I do not know of any bases on which this act may be justified.

Some Bid`ah (Innovations in religion) said at the deathbed

Q : H.A.M. from Umdorman in Sudan says: Some people recite their Wird (portion of the Qur'an and formulae of remembering Allah read daily) as follows: reciting bismillah ar-rahman ar-rahim i.e. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, 786 times, Surat Al-Waqi`ah (the Qur'an, Surah 56) 42 times, Surat Al-Dharriat (the Qur'an, Surah 51) 60 times, and Surat Ya-Sin (the Qur'an, Surah 36) 41 times. When they are beside a dying person or others, they recite the following form of Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) Ya latif (O Knower of the most subtle things!). Is this permissible? Please, advise. May Allah benefit us and you!

Answer: I do not know any religious foundation supporting this act or the number indicated. Indeed, pronouncing and believing in this is an innovation in religion.

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Observing this practice in the mentioned manner by those who are near the dead person or after the person's death is baseless. Believers should recite the Qur'an as much as possible, day and night. They should say Bismillah ar-rahman ar-rahim (i.e. in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful) upon beginning to recite the Qur'an, upon eating and drinking, entering homes, having sexual intercourse with one's wife and other matters mentioned in the Sunnah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴿Every important matter that is not started by Bismillah (in the name of Allah) will be cut out (i.e. Allah's blessing will be cut of it out)﴾ Likewise, saying Ya latif (O Knower of the most subltle things!) or the like certain number of times and believing it is Sunnah is a groundless act and an innovation but it is preferred to supplicate without certain numbers such as saying O Allah! Have mercy on us, forgive us, and guide us, or similar phrases.

Also, O Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, the Most Wise have mercy on us, make us victorious, make our hearts pure and our deeds good. Allah (Exalted be He) says, ﴿And your Lord said: "Invoke Me, [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islâmic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your (invocation).﴾ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴿And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor).﴾ But without limiting this to a certain number that may not increased or decreased.

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This is so unless the number was indicated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying "La Ilah Illa Allah, Wahdahu La Sharika Lah, Lahu Al-Mulk Wa Lahu Al-Hamd, Wa Huwa `Ala Kull Shay'in Qadir" (i.e. None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone, without any partner. To Allah belong all sovereignty and praise. He is Omnipotent over all things) one hundred times every day as this supplication was said by the Prophet (peace be upon him), and saying: "Subhana Allah wabihamdihi i.e. All Glory and Praise are due to Allah" one hundred times in the morning and in the evening, and also (a) "Subhana Allah" (Glory is to Allah), (b) "Al-Hamdu Lillah" (praise is due to

Allah) and (c) "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is the Great), thirty-three times after every obligatory pray of the daily five prayers, so that they are said all ninety-nine times after every prayer and to conclude the hundred times with saying, "La Ilah Illa Allah, Wahdahu La Sharika Lah, Lahu Al-Mulk Wa Lahu Al-Hamd, Wa Huwa `Ala Kull Shay'in Qadir". All these supplications were said by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and all similar supplications. If one recite some verses of the Qur'an beside the dead, it is permissible as it was narrated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) what indicates that. It is preferred to make Talqin (encouraging someone dying to say: "La ilaha illa Allah i.e. There is no god but Allah") so that the person on the deathbed will say it as the last thing he says. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Dictate to your dying ones (to say), 'There is no god but Allah.'") Reported by Muslim in his Sahih. The dying ones here means the person who is on the deathbed as mentioned in the two most correct opinions of scholars as they are the only ones who benefit from Talqin (encouraging someone dying to say: "La ilaha illa Allah"). May Allah grant us success!

It is preferred to move the dying person toward the direction of the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah)

Q Is it preferred to move the dying person toward the direction of Qiblah?

A : Yes, it is preferred to do so as indicated by scholars. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ❪Al-Ka`bah is your Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah) when you are alive i.e. during Salah (Prayer) or on the death bed (in the grave).❫

How to direct the dying person towards the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah)

How should the dying person be moved towards the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah)?

Answer: He should be moved to lie on his right side while his face should be directed to the Qiblah and to be put in the Lahd (a crevice on the side of a grave facing the direction faced for Prayer).

The ruling on kissing the dead

Is to permissible to kiss a dead person?

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Answer: It is permissible to kiss a dying person by one of his female Mahrams (spouses or unmarriageable relatives) or males as was done by Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) when he kissed the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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Washing the dead

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One who abandons prayer should not be washed and no funeral prayer is to be offered on him and should not be buried in the Muslim graves

Q Brother M.S.A. from Ma`an in Jordan says: What is the ruling on a person who dies while he abandons prayer taking into consideration that his parents are Muslims? How should we deal with him regarding washing, shrouding him, praying for him, burying him, and supplicating Allah to forgive him?

A: If a Mukallaf (a person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for his actions) abandons prayers, he is considered a disbeliever and is not to be washed, prayed for, or buried in the Muslim graves. He should not be inherited by his relatives as indicated by the most correct opinions of scholars. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in an authentic Hadith, (What makes one a disbeliever and a polytheist is abandoning prayers.) Reported by Muslim in his Sahih. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: (What differentiates between us

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and them is offering prayer. Any one who abandons it is a disbeliever.) Reported by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) with a good chain of narration as narrated in the Hadith of Burayda, may Allah be pleased with him and `Abdullah Ibn Shaqiq Al-`Uqayly, the honorable figure among the Tabi`un (Followers, the generation after the Companions of the Prophet), may Allah forgive him, said: the Prophet's companions believed that abandoning nothing leads to disbelief but prayer. There are many Hadith and Athar (narrations from the Companions) in this regard. They refer to those who abandon it out of laziness and do not deny that it is obligatory on them but those who deny that it is obligatory, they are renegade disbelievers as indicated by most scholars. May Allah improve the Muslims' conditions and guide them to His Right Path. Indeed, Allah is All-Hearer, Ever Near (to all things).

The ruling on asking about the condition of the dead person before washing his body

Q Is it permissible for the one who washes the dead to ask the family of the deceased whether he used to offer prayer or not?

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Answer: As long as the deceased is known to be a Muslim and those who attend are Muslims, there would be no need to ask his family about that. Some persons go easy with this matter and that results in great shames. Likewise, upon offering prayer for the deceased, there is no need to ask about that if the deceased is known to be a Muslim.

Who is the most deserving person to wash the deceased?

Q Is is better for the family to wash the deceased?

Answer: It is not necessary but it should be done by a trustworthy, good, and experienced person.

Q : If the will of the deceased specifies the one who will wash his body, is it obligatory to carry out this will?

Answer: Yes, his will should be carried out.

A spouse may wash his marriage partner after death

Q : Is it better for the wife to wash her dead husband or to leave him for men to wash him?

Answer: It is permissible for the wife to wash her husband, if she knows how to do this. `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) washed his wife Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her). Asma' bint `Umays washed her husband Abu Bakr Al-Sidiq (may Allah be pleased with him).

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Q : Brother S.A.A. from Tanta, Arab Republic of Egypt, says: Is it permissible for a wife to wash her husband after his death? Is it permissible for a man to wash his wife after her death? Please, give us your fatwa. May Allah reward you!

Answer: Religious proofs indicate that there is no blame if the wife washes her husband and looks at him and there is no blame if the husband washes his wife. Asma' bint `Umays (may Allah be pleased with her) washed her husband Abu Bakr Al-Sidiq (may Allah be pleased with him). Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her) made a will to `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) [her husband] to wash her. May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on a man washing his wife or young daughter

Q : Is it permissible for a man to wash his wife if she is dead or to wash a one/two-year-old girl even if she is not his Mahram (spouse or unmarriageable relative)?

Answer: There is no blame if a man washes his wife and a woman washes her husband as that was proved by the Prophet's Sunnah and [the practice of] the Salaf (righteous predecessors) but it is not permissible for a man to wash any other woman other than his wife like his mother or daughter. It is not permissible for a man to wash them or to wash others who are not his Mahram (spouse or unmarriageable relative).

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It is permissible to wash his concubine whom he is allowed to have intercourse with as she is like his wife. Also, there is no blame to wash young girls who are less than seven years old. There is no blame if men wash young girls less than this age whether they were Mahram (spouse or unmarriageable relative) or not, as young girls at this age still have no `Awrah (private parts of the body that must be covered in public) and also women are permitted to wash young boys less than seven years old. May Allah grant us success!

The marriage relationship does not end upon death

Q : Some scholars view that the marriage relationship ends with death. What do you think about that?

Answer: This view contradicts the Sunnah and has to be discarded.

Q : We heard most people say that the wife becomes as a stranger to her husband after her death and it is not permissible for the husband to look at her or to put her in the Lahd (a crevice on the side of a grave facing the direction faced for Prayer). Is this correct? Please, advise. May Allah bless you.

Answer: Religious evidence indicate that there is no blame on the wife if she washes her husband or looks at him and there is no blame on him if he washes or looks at her.

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Asma' bint `Umays washed her husband Abu Bakr Al-Sidiq (may Allah be pleased with them). In her will, Fatimah asked to be washed by [her husband] `Aly (may Allah be pleased with them). May Allah grant us success!

It is permissible for a husband to wash a woman whom he divorced as a revocable divorce

Q : Is it permissible for one to wash the body of his divorced wife who died?

Answer: If it was a revocable divorce (one or two divorces), that would be permissible.

The number of people who may wash the dead

Q Is there any minimum number that should attend the washing of the dead?

A : It is sufficient to use only one person and to bring another one to assist him.

The things used when washing the dead

From `Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah Ibn Baz to the honorable brother shaykh `A.G. May Allah grant him success!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!), to continue:

I received your honorable letter - may Allah guide you - including your question about washing the dead with soap and shampoo in case there is accumulated dirt on the body. I do not recall that any one ever posed this issue. However, I recommend you to act in accordance with the Hadith of Um `Atiyyah by washing the dead with water and lotus jujube in all times of wash, starting with the right side and the organs of Wudu' (ablution) along with being attentive in removing the accumulated dirt and the like in all times of washing until the body is purified, even if this takes more than seven times of washing, according to the mentioned Hadith.

Furthermore, there is no need to use soap, shampoo and such things unless the lotus jujube is insufficient to remove the dirt. In this case, it is permissible to use soap, shampoo, potash and whatever types of detergents that are available starting from the first wash. You should also add

some Camphor in the last wash in accordance with the mentioned Hadith. This is the Sunnah reported from the authentic Hadiths, as far as I know, according to the Hadith of Um `Atiyyah and other Hadith mentioned to the same effect.

I ask Allah to bless your efforts and grant you success and sincerity; He is the Best to be sought for help. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

Ruling on using Sidr when washing the dead

Q: Does the Hadith of Ibn `Abbas indicates the obligation of using Sidr (lotus jujube)?

A: It is permissible and the commandment mentioned denotes the desirability according to view of scholars since it is more purifying, but if Sidr is unavailable, it is permissible to replace it with soap, potash or whatever has the same effect.

Q: Is it a Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) to put the foam of Sidr on the head of the dead ?

A: This has been mentioned by some jurists who said that it is better in cleansing. However, it is not obligatory; rather, it is prescribed to wash the dead with water and Sidr.

Ruling on trimming the mustache and nails and shaving the armpit and pubic hair of the deceased

Q: Is it permissible to trim the mustache and nails or to shave the armpit and pubic hair of the deceased?

A: It is Mustahab (desirable) to trim the mustache and nails of the deceased but I do not know that there exists any evidence on the permissibility of shaving the pubic and armpit hair. Therefore, it is better not to do it since these parts of the body are hidden unlike the nails and mustache.

Q: Should the mustache of the deceased and his nails be trimmed?

A: There is no evidence for this but there is nothing wrong with doing so since some scholars provided for its permissibility. As for shaving the pubic hair or offering circumcision, it is impermissible to do it for a deceased because there is no evidence.

Ruling on removing the gold teeth from the deceased

Q: If a person who has gold teeth dies, should his gold teeth be removed, even if this removing

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is difficult, to be used for repaying his debts? If the deceased has no debts, should the gold teeth be left?

A: When a person who has gold or silver teeth dies, there is no harm if the teeth are left if removing them is difficult. This is true regardless of whether he was a debtor or not. It is possible for the heirs to dig up the grave and recover the teeth later to use them for repaying the debts. On the other hand, when removing them is easy, they must be removed because leaving them there is a waste of money which is disallowed.

Applying fragrant oils to the body of the deceased and enshrouding it

Q: What is the ruling on perfuming the deceased and wrapping him in a shroud?

A: Perfuming the deceased and wrapping him in a shroud is an act of Sunnah unless he is a Muhrim (pilgrim in the ritual state for Hajj and `Umrah).

Ruling on cleaning the deceased's teeth with Miswak

Q: What is the ruling on cleaning the deceased's teeth with Miswak (tooth-cleansing stick)?

A: I know of no religious foundation for such act; rather one should first perform wudu' for the deceased and then wash him. If miswak is used when rinsing out the mouth, as in the case of the living, there is nothing wrong with this.

Ruling on washing the deceased more than seven times

Q: If washing the deceased seven times is not enough to attain purity, can we increase the number of washings?

A: There is no harm if it is necessary.

Urging women to take part in washing the dead

Q: There is a great number of places for washing the dead in Riyadh for both men and women. As there are few women who undertake this job, especially among those who are knowledgeable and seeking reward from Allah, and this matter is very important, we would like Your Eminence to clarify this and urge Muslim women to participate in it by sending their names and phone numbers to Your Eminence or to the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) of a Masjid (mosque) where there is a place for washing the dead.

A: It is a very good suggestion. There is no doubt that it is important for women to undertake this job just like men, as no one can wash a dead woman except another woman,

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just like men wash the dead men. However, there is no harm in a man washing his wife or a woman washing her husband. It was authentically reported that Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was washed by his wife Asma' bint `Umays (may Allah be pleased with her), and `Aly ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) washed his wife Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her). A master and his bondmaid may also wash each other like a husband and a wife. Otherwise, women should wash dead women and men should wash dead men. If any woman finds herself capable of doing so, she should better seek Allah's reward and undertake this job by giving officials her phone number so that they can call her whenever needed. She should give due care to this matter and refer to the sayings of scholars about washing the dead in order to be well-informed about it. She should practice this and anticipate great reward from Allah. However, if she is paid a fee, there is no harm in taking it.

Q: A woman used to voluntarily wash the dead. Lately, she refused to do this job anymore despite the need for it. She claims that she has become indifferent and heartless towards the dead. Do you agree with this opinion?

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A: She should seek Allah's Reward and endure patiently in washing the dead as long as there is a need for this and she is known to be good and to have mastery of this job, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who fulfills the needs of their brother (i.e. Fellow Muslim), Allah will fulfill their needs.﴿ Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾Allah helps His servant as long as the servant helps his brother (i.e. fellow Muslim).﴿ Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic book of Hadith). There are many other Hadith mentioned to this effect.

Ruling on holding training courses to learn how to wash the dead

Q: What is the ruling on holding training courses to learn how to wash the dead?

A: Teaching how to wash the dead is a good act and Mashru` (Islamically acceptable). There is nothing wrong with this, as some people do not know how to wash the dead properly. Besides, there is a dire need for people to know how to wash the dead.

Ruling on taking photographs

of the washing of the deceased as a reminder or for learning

Q: What is the ruling on taking photographs of the washing of the deceased on a video tape, then selling it on the grounds that it is for the sake of reminding people of death?

A: If what is meant is taking photographs of the deceased whilst they are being washed, that is not permissible, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade making Taswir (painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography) of any beings with souls and cursed the Musawwirs (ones who make pictures and statues, or photographs of living beings) and said: ("The most severely punished of the people on the Day of Resurrection are the Musawwirs.")

However, if what the questioner means is to explain how to wash the deceased in the manner prescribed by Allah on a video tape which is to be distributed and sold, then there is nothing wrong with that just as recordings may be made to teach people how to offer Salah (Prayer) and other things which people need but without taking photos.

May Allah help us all to acquire beneficial knowledge and do righteous deeds!

Q: What is the ruling on teaching the proper manner of washing and shrouding the dead by way of video?

A: Teaching this matter should be without video recording, for there are so many Sahih (authentic) Hadiths that prohibit Taswir (painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography) and curse the Musawwirs.

Washing the dead Muhrim

Q: What is the prescribed way for washing a Muhrim (pilgrim in the ritual state for Hajj and `Umrah) who dies in this state?

A: When a Muhrim dies, they should be washed without being perfumed and without having their face or head covered. They should be shrouded in their Ihram (clothing worn during the ritual state for Hajj and `Umrah [lesser pilgrimage]). They are not to be clothed in a Qamis (long shirt) or turban or anything else, for they will be raised on the Day of Resurrection reciting the Talbiyah (devotional expressions chanted at certain times during Hajj and `Umrah), as indicated by the Sahih (authentic) Hadith from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). However, the rest of the Hajj rituals should not be made up for on their behalf, whether the death was before or after their witnessing the Day of `Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah), for the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order people to do so.

Q: What is the ruling on one who dies while performing an invalid Hajj?

A: They are to be treated as a person who dies while performing the rituals of a valid Hajj; they are to be shrouded in their two garments without being perfumed or having their face or head covered. It is reported on the authority of Ibn

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`Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that when a man fell off his camel and died, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Wash him with water and Sidr and shroud him in his two pieces of cloth. Do not put perfume on him or cover his head, as he will be raised on the Day of Resurrection reciting the Talbiyah.") (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim, the wording is of Muslim).

Ruling on washing a person wounded in a battle and dies after it

Q: If a person dies due to the wounds he suffered in a battle, should he be washed, shrouded, and offered Funeral Prayer?

A: Yes, he is to be washed, shrouded and offered Funeral Prayer. He will hopefully receive the same reward as a martyr, if his intention was sincere.

The oppressed is to be washed and offered Funeral Prayer

Q: Should the body of a person who dies after enduring Zhulm (injustice) be washed?

A: Yes, they should be washed and offered Funeral Prayer, because `Umar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him)

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was killed unjustly and `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was killed unjustly, but the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) washed them and offered Funeral Prayer on them. Similarly, `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) was killed unjustly; nevertheless, he was washed and Funeral Prayer was made for him.

Ruling on washing and offering the Funeral Prayer for a person who commits suicide

Q: Should a person who commits suicide be washed and offered Funeral Prayer?

A: A person who commits suicide should be washed, offered Funeral Prayer and buried with the Muslims, because he is a sinner not a Kafir (disbeliever/non-Muslim). Killing oneself is a sin that does not lead to Kufr (disbelief). If a person killed themself - May Allah save us - they should be washed, shrouded and offered Funeral Prayer. However, the ruler and eminent people should not offer the Funeral Prayer over him, by way of rebuke, lest anyone should think that they approve of what he did. If the ruler, judge, president or mayor does not offer the Funeral Prayer over him as a way of denouncing this action and showing that it is wrong, then this is good, but some of the Muslims should still offer the Funeral Prayer over him.

The manner of washing the dead

in an accident when the body is disfigured

Q: \`A.\`A.S from Riyadh inquires: How should a person who dies in an accident and his body is disfigured and parts may have been cut off be washed? May Allah save us!

A: It is obligatory to wash him just like anyone else; if that is possible. If it is not possible, then Tayammum (dry ablution) should be done for him, because Tayammum replaces washing with water when it is not possible. May Allah grant us success!

The person who washes the dead is allowed to tell people about the good signs but should not disclose the bad ones

Q: Is it permissible for a person who washes the dead to tell people about the good and bad signs?

A: It is permissible to tell people about the good but should not disclose the bad signs, for it will be considered Ghibah (backbiting). However, if they say that some people became black without specifying the people intended, there is nothing wrong with this. However, it is forbidden to say "I washed so and so and saw such and such bad signs", for this grieves and hurts his family and is considered Ghibah.

Examining the authenticity of the following report:

"Whoever washes a Muslim and conceals his defects..."

Q: What is the degree of authenticity of the report that states: "Whoever washes a dead Muslim and conceals his defects will come out as sinless as a new-born child."?

A: This saying is baseless. However, it is Mustahab (desirable) for a person who washes the dead people to keep their defects hidden from people. As for revealing their merits, there is nothing wrong with that; rather, this is good, for it bears glad tidings to the deceased's family and delights them. Undoubtedly, revealing their defects is a kind of Ghibah (backbiting).

Q: There is a Hadith that reads: ("Whoever washes a dead body and conceals his defects, Allah will conceal his defects on the Day of the Resurrection,") **what is the degree of authenticity of this Hadith?**

A: I do not know of this saying, but there is a Sahih (authentic) Hadith that suffices for it, which is the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ("Whoever conceals (the defects of) a Muslim, Allah will conceal him (his defects) in this world and in the Hereafter.") (Related by Muslim in his Sahih Book of Hadith) This Hadith is equally applied to both the dead and the living people.

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Shroud

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Ways of shrouding the dead

Q: How should the dead men and women be shrouded?

A: It is an act of Sunnah Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) to shroud the dead men in three white garments, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) was shrouded. If a man is shrouded in one wide garment that covers him, this is sufficient. If he is shrouded in a Qamis (long shirt), Izar (garment worn below the waist) and a wrapper, this is permissible. As for the woman, it is better to shroud her in five garments: Izar, Khimar (veil covering to the waist), Qamis and two wrappers. This is the best according to the scholars as indicated by many Hadiths. If she is shrouded in less than this, it is permissible.

Q: How should the dead men and women be shrouded?

A: It is better for a man to be shrouded in three garments that are not including a Qamis or a turban. A woman is to be shrouded in five pieces; Izar, Qamis, Khimar, and two wrappers. If the dead man or woman is shrouded in one garment that covers all the body, this is permissible as this matter is flexible.

Way of shrouding Muhrim woman

Q: How should the female Muhrim (pilgrim in the ritual state for Hajj and `Umrah) be shrouded?

A: She should be shrouded like any other woman in an Izar (garment worn below the waist), Khimar (veil covering to the waist), Qamis (long shirt) and two wrappers and her face is to be covered but without Niqab (face veil), for the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited women from wearing Niqab. It is permissible to cover her face without Niqab, but she should not wear perfume, because she is a Muhrim.

Knots of the shroud

Q: How many knots should be made in the shroud ?

A: There is no a prescribed number for knots, but it is sufficient to do three knots at the top, middle and bottom of the shroud. Two will also do but it is most important to tighten the shroud so as not to be unfolded.

Ruling on wrapping

the dead who has wounds in a plastic bag

Q: Some of those who wash the dead

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put those who die in car accidents in plastic bags so as not to let blood come out onto the shroud.

A: There is nothing wrong with putting something over the wound to lock it.

Should a shroud be changed or washed

if blood leaks from the deceased body after being shrouded

Q: If blood leaks from the deceased after shrouding him, does this require changing the shroud?

A: The shroud can either be changed or washed and the place from which the blood leaked should be covered with something, such as wax or the like, to stop the bleeding.

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Offering Salah (prayer) over the deceased

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Offering funeral prayer

is prescribed for men and women

Q: Is it permissible for women to offer the funeral prayer or not?

A: Offering the funeral prayer is permissible for men and women. Women may offer this Salah either at home or in the Masjid (mosque), because there is no harm in doing so. `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) and other women offered funeral prayer over the body of Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) upon his death. They offered it in the Mosque of the Prophet (peace be upon him). To conclude, offering funeral prayer is permissible for all. However, women are only forbidden to visit graves or follow the funeral procession. Otherwise, they may offer prayer for the deceased either at home, in the Masjid (mosque), at any place designated for prayer, or at the home of the deceased, there is nothing wrong with that. Women used to perform the funeral prayer behind the Prophet (peace be upon him) and continued to do so behind the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. May Allah grant us success!

Q: A sister from Riyadh says: It is noticed that women do not attend funeral prayer. My question to your Eminence Sheikh is that are they prohibited from doing so according to Shari`ah?

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A: Offering funeral prayer is permissible for men and women because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("He who attends the funeral until the prayer is offered for (the dead), for him is the reward of one qirat, and he who attends (and stays) until he is buried, for him is the reward of two qirats. It was said: What are the two qirats? He said: They are equivalent to two huge mountains.") (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Yet, it is not for women to follow funeral procession to the cemetery because they are forbidden to do so because it was reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) that Um `Atiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: ("We were forbidden to follow the funeral procession, but it was not stressed to us.") As for offering prayer over the dead, women were not forbidden from doing so either in Masjid, at

home, or in the place of prayer. Women used to perform the funeral prayer behind the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his Masjid and continued to do so after him.

As for visiting the graves and following funeral procession, this is confined to men because the Messenger (peace be upon him) cursed women who visit the graves. The wisdom behind this - Allah knows best - is that it is feared that their following funeral procession and visiting graves may stir temptation, either being tempted by men or tempting them.

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾After me I have not left any affliction more harmful to men than women.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim). May Allah grant us success!

The degree of authenticity of the following Hadith:

Women have no share in the funeral

Q: A sister asks: It was narrated that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) stated: ("Women have no share in the funeral.") **What is your opinion in this Hadith? What should women be aware of regarding this issue?**

A: As for the wording of the Hadith mentioned by the inquirer: ("Women have no share in the funeral,") we know of no basis for this or any scholar who related this. What is reported from the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) in this regard is that he (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) ("cursed women who visit graves and those who build Masjids (mosques) and place lights upon them.") The Prophet also forbade women from following funeral processions to graves. As for offering prayer over the deceased with people either in the Masjid or in places designated for prayer,

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this is permissible for all. Women used to perform both the obligatory prayers and funeral prayers behind the Prophet (peace be upon him). `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) actually offered the funeral prayer over Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) in Masjid Al-Nabi (the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah) (peace be upon him). In conclusion, women may offer Janazah along with men because there is no harm in this. As for accompanying funeral processions to the graves and visiting graves, this is prohibited for them. Thus, it is impermissible for women to do so. May Allah grant us success!

One receives a Qirat of reward for every funeral

Q: Mr. S.G. from Riyadh asks: A man offered Funeral Prayers for five dead persons in one Salah, does he have the reward of a Qirat (a big reward) for all the dead persons or is the reward of a Qirat is designated for each Funeral Prayer? May Allah reward you!

A: We hope that he receives the reward of Qirats equal to the number of the deceased persons. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾Whoever offers a Funeral Prayer receives (a reward of) a Qirat and whoever accompanies the deceased until s/he is buried receives the reward of two Qirats.﴿ There are other Hadiths that

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carry the same meaning which indicates that the reward of Qirat corresponds to the number of the deceased persons. The Hadith indicate that whoever offers the Funeral Prayer over a dead person receives the reward of a Qirat and whoever accompanies the body till it is buried earns the reward of a Qirat and if one does both of these things, the reward is two Qirats. This is a bounty and generosity from Allah to His Servants. All praises and thanks are due to Allah. There is no Deity or Lord except Him and it is He Who grants success.

The Imam of the Masjid has a greater right

to lead the Funeral Prayer than the guardian of the deceased

Q: Who should lead the Funeral Prayer; the relative of the dead or the regular Imam (leader of the congregational prayers)?

A: The regular Imam of the Masjid (mosque) should lead people in funeral prayer over him.

Q: If a dead person orders in a will that a certain person should lead the Funeral Prayer over him, does the designated person have a greater right than the Imam of the Masjid?

A: The appointed Imam of the Masjid should lead the prayer and he takes priority over any other person mentioned in the will based on the Prophet's statement: (A man should not lead another man in prayer while being in his (the latter's) place of authority.) The appointed Imam is the one who holds authority in his Masjid.

The ruling on traveling to offer Funeral Prayer for the deceased

Q: What is the ruling on traveling to offer the Funeral Prayer?

A: There is nothing wrong with that. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and companions!

The preference of having a larger congregation to perform the Funeral Prayer

Q: Is there any benefit in having a large number of people to perform the Funeral Prayer?

A: It is authentically reported in the Hadith of Ibn `Abbas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (There is no Muslim man who dies and forty men, who associate nothing with Allah in worship, stand over his prayer (they offer prayer over him) except Allah will accept them as intercessors for him.) Related by Muslim. The scholars thus regarded it as Mustahab (desirable) to look for a Masjid (mosque) wherein there is a larger congregation to pray for the deceased. The greater the number, the closer that is to goodness and the more supplication that will be made.

The ruling on having many rows in the Funeral Prayer even if they are incomplete

Q: Is it recommended to have many rows even if they are not complete?

A: The original ruling is to line up during the Funeral Prayer just as in the obligatory prayer; completing the first row, then the second, and so on. As for what Malik Ibn Hubayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) did, the Hadith that mentions this has a deficiency in its Isnad (chain of transmitters) and is contrary to the authentic Hadiths that indicate the necessity of completing the rows, one after another, while offering the prayer.

The position of the Imam during Funeral Prayer

Q: Where should the Imam (leader in congregational prayer) position himself when conducting the Funeral Prayer?

A: It is an act of Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) for the Imam to stand at the head of the deceased male and opposite the midst of the female. In the event where there are a number of dead persons, men should be placed in front, followed by boys, women, and then girls. One Funeral Prayer is to be performed for all of the deceased simultaneously. Doing so is in keeping with the importance of burying the deceased promptly. The Sunnah is to arrange the heads of the boys beside the heads of the men and similarly the waists of women and girls opposite the head of men in accordance with the Sunnah.

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Q: How should the remains be positioned in front of the Imam with regard to the direction of the head and feet?

A: The body of the deceased should be placed in front of the Imam who stands opposite the head of the male and the waist of the female. This is established by the authentic Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him). If there is a number of dead persons including men, women, boys and girls, men should be in front, followed by boys, and after that women followed by girls. Also, the middle of the female remains should be in aligned with the head of the male remains so that the position of Imam will be right.

Q: Is it allowable to stand to the right of the Imam during the Funeral Prayer?

A: It is permissible to stand to the right and the left of him if there is a need to do so. However, what corresponds to the Sunnah is to stand behind the Imam. If the place is narrow, there is no harm in standing to the right or left of the Imam.

The manner of performing the funeral prayer for the deceased

Q: What is the method of performing the funeral prayer over the dead?

A: The manner of performing the funeral prayer over the dead is that the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) begins by pronouncing Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") and seeking refuge in Allah (from the accursed Satan). He then recites the Basmalah (saying, "Bismillah Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful]") and Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter of the Glorious Qur'an, Surah number I). It is desirable that he recites a short Surah after Al-Fatihah, such as Al-Ikhlas or Al-`Asr, or some Ayahs, as it is authentically related from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Hadith of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) which indicates this. Then, the Imam should pronounce the second Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") and invoke Allah's peace upon the Prophet

(peace be upon him) in the same manner one invokes Allah's peace upon him in the final Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer). The Imam pronounces the third

Takbir and supplicates Allah for the deceased with the well-known supplications (of the Prophet), being attentive to mentioning the correct gender and plural pronouns for multiple funerals. Finally, the Imam pronounces the fourth Takbir followed by a moment of silence and then performs Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) once to his right only.

As for the opening invocation, there is no harm in either saying or not saying it. Yet it is better to omit it in keeping with the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Hasten the funeral proceedings...﴿

Q: Would you please explain to us how should the funeral prayer be offered as reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him), because many people do not know how should it be performed?

A: The manner of offering Janazah prayer was demonstrated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) as follows: It begins with pronouncing Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") and seeking refuge in Allah (from the accursed Satan). He then recites the Basmalah (saying, "Bismillah Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful]") and Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter of the Glorious Qur'an, Surah number I) followed by a short Surah or some Ayahs. Next, one pronounces Takbir and invokes Allah's peace upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) as one does at the end of the prayer. Then one pronounces a third Takbir and offers Du`a for the deceased. The best is to say: ﴾O Allah, forgive our living and our dead, those who are present among us and those who are absent, our young and our old, our males and our females. O Allah, whoever You decree to live, let him live in Islam and whoever You cause to die, cause him to die with

Iman (Faith). O Allah, forgive him and have mercy on him, keep him safe and sound and forgive him, honor the place where he settles and make his entrance wide; wash him with water, snow and hail, and cleanse him of sins as a white garment is cleansed of dirt. O Allah, give him a house better than his house and a family better than his family. O Allah, admit him to Paradise and protect him from the torment of the grave and the torment of Hell-fire; make his grave spacious and fill it with light. O Allah, do not deprive us of the reward and do not cause us to go astray after this)."﴿ All of this was recorded from the Prophet (peace be upon him). If you offer Du`a using other words, this is fine. For example, one may say, "O Allah, if he was a doer of good, then increase his good deeds and if he was a wrongdoer, then forgive his bad deeds. O Allah, forgive him and give him the strength to say the right thing." Then, after a fourth Takbir there is a short pause ending with one Taslim to the right. This was narrated from the Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him).

It is of the Sunnah for the Imam to stand at the head of the body if the deceased is a male and by the middle if it is the remains of a female as authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Hadith of Anas and Samurah ibn Jundub (may Allah be pleased with them both). As for the opinion held by some scholars that it is prescribed in the Sunnah that the Imam stand at the chest of the body if the deceased is a male, this is a weak opinion that has no basis as far as we know. When performing Salah, the dead body should be positioned facing the direction of the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾It is the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah) of Muslims while living i.e. during Salah and after death [in the grave].﴿ May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on reciting

Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter of the Glorious Qur'an, Surah number 1) in the Funeral Prayer

Q: What is the ruling on reciting Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter of the Glorious Qur'an, Surah number 1) in the Funeral Prayer?

A: It is obligatory, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Pray as you have seen me praying.﴿ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾There is no prayer for the one who does not recite Al-Fatihah.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Ruling on reciting Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter of the Glorious Qur'an, Surah number 1) out loud sometimes in the Funeral Prayer

Q: What is the ruling on reciting Al-Fatihah sometimes aloud during the Funeral Prayer in order to convey that it is an act of the Sunnah?

A: There is no harm in reciting Al-Fatihah out loud sometimes and if it is followed it by reciting

a short Surah, it is all right. In this case, there is no harm in doing so; rather, this is better because this was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Hadith of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both). Yet, if a person only recites Al-Fatihah, this will be sufficient.

The ruling on reciting a Surah

after Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter of the Glorious Qur'an, Surah number 1) in the Funeral Prayer

Q: What is the ruling on reciting a Surah after reciting Al-Fatihah in the Funeral Prayer?

A: Reciting a Surah after reciting Al-Fatihah is better, as it was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) from the Hadith of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them).

The ruling on invoking peace and blessings on the Prophet

(peace be upon him) during the Funeral Prayer

Q: What is the ruling on invoking peace and blessings on the Prophet during the Funeral Prayer?

A: Scholars are aware that it is obligatory to supplicate Allah (Exalted be He) to confer peace and blessings on the Prophet and its time is after the second time of Takbir (saying, "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest)) and the praying person should not leave it.

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The formula of Du`a' for the deceased during the Funeral Prayer

Q: Someone from Riyadh says, "Upon finishing Salah in a Masjid (mosque), the Imam asked the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) to offer the Funeral Prayer for a group of dead persons. This group included a man, a woman, a boy and a girl. What is the lawful formula of Du`a' (supplication) we should recite in such a case? Sometimes, the Imam asks the Ma`mums to offer the Funeral Prayer without defining the gender or age of the dead person. What is the suitable Du`a' should we recite in this situation?

A: Du`a' should be made for all the deceased, whether males or females, by saying "Allahumma aghfir lahum warhamhum (O Allah forgive them and have mercy on them...)". If they are two you should say, 'Allahumma aghfir lahuma warhamhuma... (O Allah, forgive them both and have mercy on them both...)".

If the deceased is a child, the du`a' should be: "Allahumma ij'alhu dhukhran li walidayhi wa faratan wa shafi'an mujaban. Allahumma a'zzim bihi ujurahuma wa thaqqil bihi mawazinahuma wa alhiqhu bi salih salaf al-mu'minin waj'alhu fi kafalat Ibrahim 'alayhi al-salam, wa qihi bi rahmatika 'adhab il-jahim

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(O Allah, make him a stored treasure for his parents, and a preceding reward and an answered intercessor. O Allah, increase their reward through him and make their scales weigh heavily. Join him with the righteous believers who have gone on before, place him in the care of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and protect him from the torment of Hell by Your mercy).

If the Ma'mum does not know the number of dead persons for whom they offer Funeral Prayer, they should say: Allahumma ighfir lahum warhamhum... (O Allah forgive them and have mercy on them...) May Allah grant us success!

The way of supplicating during Funeral Prayer for a deceased person whose gender is unknown

Q: If a person, who offers the Funeral Prayer behind the Imam, does not know whether the deceased is a man or a woman, how should he supplicate for the deceased?

A: There is some flexibility in this concern. If the person said, "O Allah, forgive him considering the dead as male, there is nothing wrong with that, and if he said "O Allah, forgive her" intending the Funeral Prayer (which is feminine in Arabic), there is also no blame.

Du`a' made during the Funeral Prayer for a child

Q: What is the Du`a' that one should recite during the funeral prayer for a child?

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A: The funeral prayer for a child is not different from that for the adults. However, upon making Du`a', one should say, "Allahumma ij'alhu dhukhran li walidayhi wa faratan wa shafi'an mujaban. Allahumma a'zzim bihi ujurahuma wa thaqqil bihi mawazinahuma wa alhiqhu bi salih salaf al-mu'minin waj'alhu fi kafalat Ibrahim 'alayhi al-salam, wa qihi bi rahmatika 'adhab il-jahim (O Allah, make him a stored treasure for his parents, and a preceding reward and an answered intercessor. O Allah, increase their reward through him and make their scales weigh heavily. Join him with the righteous believers who have gone on before, place him in the care of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and protect him from the torment of Hell by Your mercy). It was authentically that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Funeral Prayer should be offered for the dead child, asking forgiveness and mercy for his parents.﴿

Nothing is authentically reported regarding reciting anything after the fourth Takbirah

Q: Should a person recite anything after the fourth Takbirah (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]")?

A: Nothing is authentically reported in this regard; rather a person should offer Takbir and keep silent for a while and then offer Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after the fourth (i.e. Takbirah).

Ruling on exceeding the four Takbirs

Q: If the deceased is a merit-worthy person, should we increase the number of Takbirs (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]")?

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A: It is better to restrict them to four only in accordance to the usual practice nowadays, because this was the last thing observed by the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him). Furthermore, despite the great merit of Al-Najashy, the Prophet (peace be upon him) only made four Takbirs in his Funeral Prayer for him.

Ruling on raising the hands

on pronouncing Takbir in the Funeral Prayer

Q: Is raising hands upon pronouncing Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") in the Funeral Prayer is an act of Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet)?

A: The Sunnah is to raise the hands upon pronouncing the four Takbirs, for what is authentically reported from Ibn `Umar and Ibn `Abbas that they used to raise their hands on pronouncing the four Takbirs. It was also related by Al-Daraqutny as a Hadith Marfu` (a Hadith narrated from the Prophet with a connected or disconnected chain of narration) on the authority of Ibn `Umar with a good Sanad (chain of narrators).

It is an act of the Sunnah for the person who misses some of Takbir during the Funeral Prayer to make up for them

Brother M.M.A. from New York says, "If a person misses some times of Takbir (saying, "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest)) in the Funeral Prayer, should he make up for them? If so, how should this be done?

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A: It is an act of the Sunnah for anyone who misses some of the times of Takbir in the Funeral Prayer to make up for them based on the general meaning of the Prophet's saying (peace be upon him), ﴾When the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) is pronounced, go to prayer walking with tranquility and gravity, pray what you attend and complete what you have missed.﴿ The way to offer the missed times of Takbir is to regard the first Takbir that one catches up as the first part of the prayer and what is offered after that is the last part of it. This is according to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Pray what you attend and complete what you have missed.﴿ If a person joins the congregation offering the Funeral Prayer in the third time of Takbir, he should say Takbir and recite Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter of the Glorious Qur'an, Surah number 1). Then, when the Imam says the Takbir for the fourth time, he should say Takbir after him and invoke peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him). When the Imam says Taslim (salutation ending prayer), he should say Takbir and recite a brief supplication for the deceased and say the fourth time of Takbir and recite Taslim. May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him.

Q: If one joins the Funeral Prayer and he misses a part of it, should he make up for what he missed?

A: He should offer it directly. If he/she joins the Funeral Prayer while the Imam is in

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the third time of Takbir (saying, "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest) and when the Imam say Takbir for the fourth time, one says Takbir which is the counted the second one for him and invokes blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then, when the Imam says Taslim (salutation ending prayer), one recites Takbir which is counted the third time for him and supplicates Allah for the dead. After that, one says Takbir for the fourth time and says Taslim.

Q: If the corpse of the dead is taken up, how a person missing a part of the Funeral Prayer makes up for it?

A: He/she should say Takbir at the same time, recite Surah-Al-Fatihah, and say Takbir after the Imam says Takbir. Then, he/she invokes Allah to confer blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) and after the Imam says Taslim (salutation ending prayer), he/she is to recite Takbir and say "O Allah, forgive him (the dead person in general). After that he/she say Taslim if he misses two times

of Takbir.

Worshippers who join the Imam while offering

the Funeral Prayer thinking it is an obligatory Salah

Q: I entered the Masjid (mosque) to offer the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer and found that the people had begun offering Salah (Prayer). I pronounced Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") with them. However, I then realized they were offering the Funeral Prayer. I was confused and discontinued my Salah. I pronounced Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: ''Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]'' upon starting Prayer) again to offer the Zhuhr Prayer, and I did not continue the Funeral Prayer. What is the ruling on what I did?

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Do I have to expiate for it? Please advise.

A: You should have intended to offer the Funeral Prayer as soon as you knew, pronounced Takbir, continued Salah with the people, made up for the missed Takbirs if there were any, and then offered the Zhuhr Prayer. This is because the Funeral Prayer has its limited and specific time, but there is plenty of time to offer the Zhuhr Prayer. May Allah grant us success!

The priority of the Funeral Prayer

over the obligatory Salah in this case

Q: If a person enters the Masjid (mosque) to offer the Funeral Prayer, but he had not offered the obligatory Salah (Prayer), should he offer the obligatory Salah first or join the congregation in the Funeral Prayer? If the Funeral is already removed and carried, should he offer the Funeral Prayer as well?

A: He should offer the Funeral Prayer first and then the obligatory Salah, because the Funeral Prayer cannot be repeated, but there is plenty of time to offer the Obligatory Salah. However, if the funeral is already carried, he should not offer the Funeral Prayer. He may follow it and offer the Funeral Prayer at the time of burial or by the grave.

What should a person do when he offers the obligatory Salah in a Masjid and offers Funeral Prayer in another Masjid?

Q: Some people come to offer the Funeral Salah after they have offered the obligatory Salah in other Masjids (mosques) and when the obligatory Salah is established in the Masjid in which they offer the Funeral Prayer, should they repeat their Salah in the Masjid with Muslims or sit and wait for them in the Masjid? What should a latecomer do when he misses some Rak`ahs? Should he offer Funeral Prayer with them for fear of missing the reward of Funeral Prayer?

A: If a person comes late and finds that people have finished Salah, it is permissible for him to offer Salah with them as a Nafilah (supererogatory) because of what has been authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said to Abu Dhar: (Observe the Salah at its proper time and if Iqamah (call to start the Salah) is due while you are in the Masjid, pray with them and it would be a Nafilah (supererogatory Salah) for you.) (Two men were brought to the Prophet (peace be upon him) while he was in Mina during the Farewell Hajj who did not offer Fajr (Dawn) Prayer with him, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to them: " What prevented you from offering the Salah with us?"

Thereupon, they said: O Messenger of Allah, we have offered Salah in our houses. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to them: If you offered Salah in your houses and then you could catch the Imam while praying, offer Salah with him for it is a Nafilah for you.) They are many Hadiths in this regard which indicate that a Muslim should offer Salah with the Imam whenever he catches him and it will be a Nafilah for him.

The ruling on offering the Funeral Prayer after the burial

Q: What is the ruling on offering the Funeral Prayer after the burial? Does it have a month as a maximum time limit?

A: Offering the Funeral Prayer after the burial is a Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that. If a person did not attend the Funeral Prayer, he should offer it after the burial. Even if a person had offered it, he may offer it again by the grave with those who missed it. There is no harm in doing this even if it is done two or three times. The most preponderant opinion among the scholars is that it may be offered until a month has passed.

The time limit for offering the Funeral Prayer

on the deceased person after burial

Q: Is it permissible to offer Funeral Prayers on a deceased person who is in the grave a month after his burial?

A: It is better to avoid this, for there is a difference among the scholars concerning its validity and the longest period reported about the Prophet during which he (peace be upon him) offered Funeral Prayer on a grave is one month. However, the original ruling is the impermissibility of offering prayers by graves.

Q: We are aware that the well-known opinion of scholars is the legality of offering prayer on the deceased person about a month after burying him. Then, what is your view with regard to the prayer the Prophet (peace be upon him) made for the deceased companions buried in Baqi` (the graveyard of Madinah, near the Prophet's Mosque) at the end of his life and supplicated for them?

A: The meaning of offering prayers for them here is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited the supplications recited for the deceased for them.

Ruling on offering the Funeral Prayer over a deceased person more than once

Q: Is it permissible for me to offer Funeral Prayer at my father's grave again when visiting him to seek mercy for him?

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A: If you offered prayer for your father with the people, then there is no need to repeat the Salah (Prayer); rather you should visit him and make Du`a' (supplication) for him. When you arrive at the graves, you should greet the inhabitants of the grave, make Du`a' for them and your father, according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Visit the graves, for they remind you of the Hereafter﴿ .

﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to teach his Companions to recite the following words when they visit the graves: As-salamu `ala ahl il-diyar min al-mu'minin wal-Muslimin, wa yarham Allah al-mustaqdimina minna wal-musta'khirin, wa inna insha'a Allah bikum la lahiqun (Peace be upon the inhabitants of the graves among the believers and Muslims. May Allah have mercy upon those who have gone ahead of us and those who shall come later on, and verily we will, insha'a Allah, join you, I ask Allah for well-being for ourselves and you)﴿ .

Thus, what you should do is to greet the inhabitants of the graves and your father, seek Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness for him. There is no need to offer the Salah again if you have already prayed over him.

But if you did not, you should go to his grave and pray over him within a month (i.e. of his death). However, if more than one month has passed, there should be no Salah according to the opinion of a group of scholars. In this case, it would be sufficient for you to make Du`a' for your father, seek Allah's Forgiveness for him, and offer money as Sadaqah (voluntary charity) on his behalf, for all these things benefit the deceased.

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Q: What is the ruling on repeating the Funeral Prayer?

A: If there is a reason for this, there is nothing wrong with doing so. For example, some people may come after the Salah has finished, then they can offer it at the grave or after burial. It is also permissible for those who attended it in the Masjid to offer it once more with those who did not at the grave. Since this includes benefit for both; those who offered the prayer and the deceased.

Q: Is it permissible to offer the Funeral Prayer over a deceased person again in the Masjid and at the grave?

A: If a person prayed over a deceased person and then met some people who were praying at the grave and redid the prayer with them, this is acceptable. For example, if a person offers the prayer in a Masjid and then goes to another Masjid for a need and finds people praying, it is permissible for him to offer prayer with them and this will be a Nafilah (Supererogatory) for him.

Ruling on offering Salah by graves at the forbidden time

Q: What is the ruling on offering Salah by graves at the forbidden time?

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A: It is forbidden to offer Salah by graves at the forbidden time except when the forbidden time is long such as the time after `Asr and Fajr. Since the forbidden time in these two cases is long, there is no harm in offering Salah during such times on the condition that there is a reason for it to be performed. As for the short times which were mentioned in the Hadith of `Uqbah (may Allah be pleased with him) in Sahih Muslim, where he (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ("There are three hours at which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade us to pray or bury our dead: when the sun begins to rise until it is fully risen, when the sun is at its zenith at midday until it has passed the meridian and when the sun inclines to setting until it sets.") Thus, it is impermissible either to offer Salah over the deceased or to bury him at these times according to this authentic Hadith.

Ruling on offering Funeral Prayer at the place where the body is washed

Q: Is it permissible to offer Funeral Prayer at the place where the body is washed for the person who cannot offer it with people in the Masjid (mosque)?

A: There is nothing wrong with that if the place is pure.

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Ruling on offering Salat-ul-Gha'ib (Funeral Prayer in absentia)

Q: What is the ruling on offering Salat-ul-Gha'ib?

A: The most famous view is that this Salah is a ruling that was only applied to Negus. Some scholars gave license to offering such Salah if the deceased has a high rank in Islam or if he is a scholar who played an active role in calling to Islam and spreading knowledge. Yet, we have no knowledge that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered such Salah for other than Negus. There is no authentic Hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered such Salah for other than Negus. Though many of the Companions died in Makkah and other places, it was not proven that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered such Salah for them.

In conclusion, the viewpoint of those who stated that it is peculiar to Negus is a powerful opinion. Yet, if this is done for those who have a high rank in Islam like Negus i.e. the scholars and rulers who have a high rank in Islam, we opine that there is no harm in doing so, In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills).

Q: What is the ruling on offering Salah for an absentee? Is it permissible to offer it for someone who has not been buried yet?

A: Offering Salah for an absentee has some details: Some scholars hold the view that such Salah should not be offered for an absentee for whom Funeral Prayer has been offered in his country,

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whereas others opine that an absentee should be offered such Salah on condition that he has a high rank in Islam, such as Negus (may Allah be merciful with him) because the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed the Funeral Prayer for Negus when he died in his country and the Prophet (peace be upon him) was told about that by the Companions. Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered Funeral Prayer in absentia for him. Yet, it was not proven that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered such Salah for other than him.

If the absentee is a just and good ruler, the ruler should give an order and offer Funeral Prayer in absentia for him.

The same applies to the true scholars and callers to guidance. It is recommended to offer the Funeral Prayer in absentia for them as the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed for Negus.

As for ordinary people, it is not prescribed to offer such Salah for them because the Messenger (peace be upon him) did not offer it for every absentee. Rather, he offered it for just one person who is Negus. This is because Negus did a favor to Islam and offered shelter to the Immigrants of the Companions who immigrated to Abyssinia (Ethiopia). He sheltered, supported, protected, and treated them well. He did a great favor for Islam. This is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) led the Companions in offering Funeral Prayer in absentia for him.

Whoever is in this rank and has a great position in Islam has the right to be offered Funeral Prayer in absentia. For example, Muslims in our country offered such Salah for Diya' Al-Haq, the President of Pakistan (may Allah be merciful with him) due to his good Islamic attitudes. The ruler gave an order to offer Funeral Prayer in absentia for him in Al-Haramayn. He was offered such Salah because he is

worthy of it due to his noble positions, care to rule by the Shari`ah and command his governors to rule by it.

We pray Allah to grant us and him pardon and forgiveness.

The point is that the absentee who has such a rank among the Muslim rulers and scholars should be offered Funeral Prayer in absentia either when dying in foreign countries or in his own country where it is permissible for the Muslims who are not present in the country to offer Funeral Prayer in absentia for him based on the story of Negus mentioned above. May Allah grant us success!

How to offer Salat-ul-Gha'ib

Q: How can we offer Salat-ul-Gha'ib (Funeral Prayer in absentia)?

A: Salat-ul-Gha'ib is just like the ordinary Funeral Prayer.

Ruling on Offering Funeral Prayer over a hypocrite

Q: If it is known that the deceased was a hypocrite, should people offer (Funeral) Prayer over them?

A: They should not, for Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿And never (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) pray (funeral prayer) for any of them (hypocrites) who dies﴾ This is if their hypocrisy was well known, but if this was just an accusation, you should offer the prayer over the deceased as the basic rule is the obligation of offering the prayer over a deceased person.

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Accordingly, a Muslim should not leave an obligation for a doubt.

Funeral Prayer offered for those practicing Bid`ah

Q: What is the ruling on not offering the Funeral Prayer for those who practice Bida` (innovations in religion)?

A: If this is done by scholars out of discouraging people from practicing Bida`, this is fine in case their Bida` does not render them Kafirs (disbelievers). However, if they commit Bida` that render them Kafirs, such as Khawarij (separatist group that believes committing a major sin amounts to disbelief), Mu`tazilah (a deviant Islamic sect claiming that those who commit major sins are in a state between belief and disbelief) and Jahmiyyah (a deviant Islamic sect denying some Attributes of Allah, claiming they are ascribed to people and cannot be ascribed to Allah), no one should offer the Funeral Prayer for them.

Q: If scholars refrain from offering the Funeral Prayer for those who practice Bida`, will they not be a role model for the people to follow so that they refrain from it as well?

A: Offering the Funeral Prayer for a Muslim is obligatory, even if they used to practice Bida`. If their Bida` did not take them out of Islam, some people may offer the Funeral Prayer for them. However, if they used to practice Bida` that renders them Kafirs, no one should offer the Funeral Prayer for them or ask Allah to forgive them, such as Jahmiyyah, Mu`tazilah and Rafidah (a Shi`ah group denying the caliphates of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq and `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and making accusations against them and many other Companions of the Prophet) who invoke `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) and seek his help in addition to Ahl-ul-Bayt (members of the Prophet's extended Muslim family). Allah (Glorified be He) says about the hypocrites and their likes, ﴿And never (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) pray (funeral prayer) for any of them (hypocrites) who dies, nor stand at his grave. Certainly they disbelieved in Allâh and His Messenger, and died while they were Fâsiqûn (rebellious, - disobedient to Allâh and His Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم).﴾

The ruling on offering Funeral Prayers on a person who committed suicide

Q: Can we perform Funeral Prayer on a person who killed himself?

A: Some Muslims should offer Funeral Prayer on him like other evildoers for he is regarded as a Muslim according to Ahl-ul-Sunnah (those adhering to the Sunnah).

Impermissibility of offering Funeral Prayers for martyrs who died in battle

Q: M.M from Zagreb, Croatia says, "One day, I offered the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer in a Masjid (mosque). After Salah (Prayer), the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) led us in Salat-ul-Gha'ib (Funeral Prayer in absentia) for the martyrs who died in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Does what he did correspond to the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet)? Are there conditions to offer Salat-ul-Gha'ib?

A: It is impermissible to offer Salat-ul-Gha'ib for the martyrs who die in battle and they should not be washed, because (the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not offer Salat-ul-Gha'ib for the martyrs of Uhud, nor did he have them washed before burial.) Related by Al-Bukhari in

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his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith on the authority of Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him).

However, Salat-ul-Gha'ib is a controversial issue among the scholars. The most preponderant opinion is that it is permissible if the absent dead person had been significant and played a great role in Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) offered Salat-ul-Gha'ib for the Negus when he died in Abyssinia, because of his great support to the Muslims and his protection for them against their enemies when they immigrated to him. It was not reported that he (peace be upon him) offered it for anyone else. That is why some scholars concluded that Salat-ul-Gha'ib was specific only for Negus. However, some others said that there is no harm in offering it for any person who has great significance in Islam like Negus. May Allah grant us success!

Avoiding offering Funeral Prayer on the debtor is an abrogated ruling

Q: Why did not the Prophet (peace be upon him) offer Funeral Prayer on the indebted persons?

Q: This ruling is abrogated and the wisdom behind this was to urge people not to take many debts

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and to take the initiative to repay the debts. After that, it was abrogated and the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered Funeral Prayer on those who are indebted and those who are not.

The ruling on offering the Funeral Prayer for a fetus

Q: Should we offer the Funeral Prayer for a dead fetus?

A: If the fetus was aborted in the fifth month or later, it should be washed, the Funeral Prayer should be offered for him and he should be buried in the Muslim graves.

Offering the Funeral Prayer

in a Musalla or in a Masjid

Q: Is it better to offer the Funeral Prayer in the Masjid (mosque) or in a Musalla (a place for Prayer)?

A: It is better to offer it in a Musalla. However, it is permissible to offer it in the Masjid, because (the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered the Funeral Prayer in the Masjid for the two sons of Baida'.) This was related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her).

Q: It is known that offering the Funeral Prayer in a Musalla is better. Should we make a Musalla in the graveyard or can we offer it in the Musalla of Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer)?

A: The Funeral Prayer is offered in the Masjid, whether for a man or a woman, unless there is a Musalla prepared for funerals. In this case, it is better to offer the Funeral Prayer in it. However, there is no harm in offering the Funeral Prayer in the Masjid, even if there is a special Musalla for the Funeral Prayer, because (the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered the Funeral Prayer for the two sons of Baida' in the Masjid.)

The ruling on putting the deceased person

in a room till the Funeral Prayer is offered on him

Q: Is there any harm in leaving the deceased in a room till people offer Funeral Prayer on him?

A: There is no harm or blame on that.

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Carrying the deceased and burying him

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The ruling on burying Baha'ys in Muslim cemeteries

Q: There are some people who adopt the doctrine of Baha' Allah who claimed Prophethood and maintained that Allah was incarnated in him. Is it allowable for Muslims to bury those disbelievers in the Muslim graves?

A: If the doctrine of Baha'ism corresponds to what you mentioned, there is no doubt that its follower are disbelievers and it is not permissible to bury them in Muslim cemeteries, for whoever claims Prophethood after the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a liar and a disbeliever according to texts of Shari`ah (Islamic Law) and the agreement of all Muslim scholars. They belie Allah's Saying, (Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is not the father of any of your men, but he is the

Messenger of Allâh and the last (end) of the Prophets.﴾

There are many Mutawatir Hadiths (Hadiths reported by a significant number of narrators throughout the chain of narration, whose agreement upon a lie is impossible) of the Prophet which prove that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last prophet and there is no prophet after him. This ruling of disbelief is equally applied to anybody who claims that Allah is incarnated in him or in anyone else according to the agreement of Muslims. Allah is not incorporated in any of his creatures for He is more Sublime and Exalted than this and whoever says that Allah is incarnated in anybody is a disbeliever according to the agreement of Muslims and he belies the Ayahs (Verses) of the Qur'an and the Hadiths of the Prophet which indicate that Allah (glory be to him) is above the throne

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and He is so high and elevated above all of His Creatures and that He (may He be Exalted and Glorified) is the Most High and Most Great. There is no one similar to him. He told His Slaves about Himself sayings, ﴾Indeed, your Lord is Allâh, Who created the heavens and the earth in Six Days, and then He rose over (Istawâ) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty).﴾ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾The Most Gracious (Allâh) rose over (Istawâ) the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty).﴾ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾So the judgement is only with Allâh, the Most High, the Most Great!﴾ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾To Him ascend (all) the goodly words, and the righteous deeds exalt it (i.e. the goodly words are not accepted by Allâh unless and until they are followed by good deeds)﴾ There are many Ayahs which affirm His Loftiness and Highness above His Throne and that He is established on His Throne in a way that fits his Glory and Greatness. He does not resemble His Creatures in this and no one knows how His Establishment or how He is except Him (may He be Exalted and Glorified). This is the doctrine of Ahl Al-Sunnah Wal-Jama`ah which was observed by all Prophets (peace be upon them) including the last one of them Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and observed as well by the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, the blessed companions of the Prophet Muhammad and those who followed them rightfully until this day.

My dear brother in Islam, I inform you that I have not read any of the books of Baha'ys until now but I know through widespread information about them that

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they are a misguided and disbelieving group that is out of the fold of Islam.

After I wrote this answer for your question, I read a discussion between one of the followers of Ahl Al-Sunnah's creed and a Baha'y which was published by Al-Hady Al-Nabawi Magazine by Ansar Al-Sunnah in Cairo in four issues of it; I read three issues; two were published in Ramadan and Dhul-Qi`dah 1368 A.H. and the other one was issued in Rabi` Al-Thany in 1369 A.H. However, the Baha'y declared in this discussion that Baha'-Allah is the Messenger of Baha'ys and that he can modify and refine all the Shari`ah before him and that every age needs a Messenger and he denied the existence of angels. He maintained that the angels are the lofty spirits of Muslims. His sayings indicate that he denies the resurrection of bodies and the Prophet's sayings concerning Al-Dajjal (the Antichrist). There is no doubt that the claim of these people of Prophethood and that every age needs a Messenger is open disbelief. May Allah grant us success! There is neither might nor power except with Allah. We ask Him to help us, you and all Muslims know what is right and follow it, for He is the Most Generous. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

May Allah's Peace and Mercy be upon His Slave and Messenger and our master and Imam, Muhammad ibn `Abdullah and upon his household, companions, and those who follow them rightfully until the Day of Judgment.

Ruling on burying amputated limbs

Q: What is the ruling on amputating an extra limb of a person, such as a finger and the like; should it be thrown out with the garbage or be collected and buried by someone in the Muslim graveyard?

A: This matter is flexible, because amputated limbs do not take the same ruling as the whole body. There is nothing wrong with putting them in the garbage, but burying them in the ground out of respect is preferable. However, the matter is open, praise be to Allah. As we said before, they do not have to be washed and buried unless it is a four-months fetus or more, but if it is merely a lump of flesh into which life has not yet been breathed, or a part of a finger or the like, then the matter is flexible, so if it is possible to bury it in good earth, that would be better.

A word concerning following the funeral procession

Praise be to Allah. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, Companions, and those who follow his guidance! It is authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ("He who attends the funeral until the prayer is offered for (the dead) will have one Qirat (of reward) and whoever attends it until the deceased is buried will have two Qirats. It was said: What are the Qirats? He said: Like two huge mountains.") This evidence is supporting the permissibility of following the funerals until prayer is offered and the deceased is buried. This is because following the funeral has many benefits such as being a reminder of death that reminds the follower to get ready for the Hereafter, given that what befell his brother (the deceased) will befall him, so he has to get ready to meet death and beware of neglecting it.

Of the benefits of following funeral is that it offers a source of comfort, consolation and condolence for the family of the deceased, so a person who follows the funeral will get the reward of offering comfort, consolation and condolence to his Muslim brothers.

Besides, following the funeral enables one to help the deceased's family carry and bury their

deceased. Following the funeral has numerous benefits; if it were only to remind of death and what happens after it and urge people to get ready for death and meeting Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), this will be sufficient, let alone the other benefits. Added to this, one will receive a great reward by offering the Funeral Prayer, one will get a Qirat or a mountain-like reward, while by offering the Prayer and burying the deceased, one will get a reward like two huge mountains. This is a great favor and benefit.

It was reported by Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful with him) in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith in another wording that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ((A believer) who accompanies the funeral procession of a Muslim out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's reward and remains with it until the funeral prayer is offered and the burial ceremonies are over, he will return with a reward of two Qirats. Each Qirat is like the size of (Mount) Uhud.) This indicates that following the funeral should be out of Iman (Faith/belief) and Ihtisab (confident anticipation of Allah's Recompense) not for Riya' (showing-off), reputation or any other purpose. One should follow the funeral believing that Allah has prescribed this and anticipating his reward from Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). This is included among the numerous benefits of following the funeral. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ((A believer) who accompanies the funeral procession of a Muslim out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's reward and remains with it until the funeral prayer is offered and

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the burial ceremonies are over, he will return with a reward of two Qirats. Each Qirat is like the size of (Mount) Uhud.) This Hadith indicates that the follower should not leave until the deceased is buried. Some people leave after the deceased is put under the ground; however, this contradicts what is prescribed, meaning that one should stay with his fellows until they finish the burial ceremony.

There is another Hadith to the same effect: (Whenever Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) finished burying the dead, he would stay (i.e. at his grave) and say: Seek forgiveness for your brother and beg steadfastness for him, for he will be questioned now.) It is prescribed for the believer when he follows the funeral to stand at the grave and stay with the family of the deceased until they finish burying. Then, it is Mustahab (desirable) to stand by the grave and supplicate for Allah's Forgiveness and steadfastness for the deceased, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said: (Seek forgiveness for your brother and beg steadfastness for him, for he will be questioned now.) So the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) is to stay by the grave asking Allah to grant the deceased forgiveness and steadfastness, then one can leave.

With regard to burning fire which some people do at the grave of the deceased, this is not Mashru` (Islamically acceptable). The Sunnah is to stand at the grave of the deceased after burying him asking Allah to grant him forgiveness and steadfastness. This is what is Mashru` and a Muslim should abide by what Allah legislated and avoid anything otherwise.

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Similarly, some people would perform Adhan (call to Prayer) or Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) or recite the Qur'an at the grave, all this is a baseless Bid`ah (innovation in religion). Moreover, going down to the grave to recite the Qur'an or perform Adhan or Iqamah is a baseless Bid`ah which should be warned against. May Allah grant us all success! May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

Accompanying the deceased to the grave

Q: What is the act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) regarding accompanying the deceased to the grave?

A: The Sunnah is to follow the deceased since he is brought out of his house until the Funeral Prayer is offered for him and the burial is finished. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ((A believer) who accompanies the funeral procession of a Muslim out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's reward and remains with it until the funeral prayer is offered and the burial ceremonies are over, will return with a reward of two Qirats. Each Qirat is like the size of (Mount) Uhud.) (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith)

Sunnah of attending the funeral

is not to sit until the deceased is put underground

Q: What is the act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) for whoever attends the funeral?

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A: The Sunnah for he who attends the funeral is not to sit until men put the coffin of the deceased down to the ground. As for leaving, it is prescribed for whoever follows the funeral not to leave until the deceased is put in the grave and burial ceremonies are finished. All this is Mustahab (desirable). However, it is better for he who follows a funeral not to leave until finishing the burial in order to get the two rewards: reward of offering the Funereal Prayer and the reward of following the funeral. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿(A believer) who accompanies the funeral procession of a Muslim and remains with it until the Funeral Prayer is offered and the burial ceremonies are over, will return with a reward of two Qirats. Each Qirat is like the size of (Mount) Uhud. ﴾ (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith).

Meaning of the Hadith of Um `Atiyyah:

We were forbidden to follow the funeral procession

Q: What is the meaning of ﴾the Hadith narrated on the authority of **Um `Atiyyah:** We were forbidden to follow the funeral procession﴿ **?**

A: What is forbidden here is to follow the funeral until the grave. As for offering the Funeral Prayer, this is prescribed for both men and women. The women used to offer the Funeral Prayer with the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Q: On the authority of Um `Atiyyah: ﴾We were forbidden to follow the funeral procession, but it was not stressed on us.

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﴿ **what does this mean?**

A: This means that the prohibition is not stressed. Prohibition, basically, means forbiddance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"What I have prohibited you to do, avoid it; what I have ordered you [to do], do as much of it as you can."﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) This indicates that it is not permissible for women to follow the funerals until the graves. As for offering the Funeral Prayers, it is permissible for them to offer it just like men. May Allah grant us success!

Obtaining the reward of two Qirats

for those who follow the funeral procession and offer Salah for it

Q: Will a person who follows a funeral procession and offer Salah for it get the reward of two Qirats i.e. a great deal of reward?

A: Yes, due to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Whosoever attends the funeral of a Muslim and remains with it until the Prayer is offered over it and the burial is completed, he will return with a reward of two Qirats i.e. a great deal of reward; each Qirat is

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equal to the Mount of Uhud.﴿ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾He who attends the funeral until the prayer is offered for (the dead), for him is the reward of one Qirat and he who attends (and stays) until he is buried, for him is the reward of two Qirats. It was said: What are the Qirats? He said: They are equivalent to two huge mountains [a great deal of reward].﴿

The Sunnah is to hasten with a funeral

Q: Is it an act of Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) to hasten with a funeral?

A: It is a Sunnah to hasten with the Funeral if there is no hardship for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Make haste with the funeral for if they (i.e. the deceased) were righteous, you are forwarding them to a welfare and if they were otherwise, you will be putting off an evil thing down your necks) Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim .

How can we reconcile between the Hadith on forbidding offering Funeral Prayer and burial during the three hours and the Hadith on the haste in burial?

Q: How can we reconcile between the Prophet's (peace be upon him) prohibition of offering Funeral Prayer and burial during three prohibited hours and the Hadith that encourage swift burial? What should we do if the Funeral Prayer is after `Asr? Please, advise. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: The two Hadiths are not contradictory; the Sunnah underlines the Prophet's command encouraging quick burial of a dead body and offering the Funeral Prayer. He (peace be upon him) said, (Hasten with the dead body for if it was righteous, you are forwarding it to welfare; and if it was otherwise, then you are putting off an evil thing down your necks.) However, when this coincides with the three prohibited hours, the burial and funeral prayer should be postponed. It is narrated that `Uqbah ibn `Amir (may Allah be pleased with him) said, (There are three hours in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade us to pray or bury our dead: when the sun begins to rise until it is fully up, when the sun is at its height at midday until it has passed the meridian, and when the sun inclines to

setting until it sets.) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih) Delaying the burial and funeral prayer during these few hours is harmless. Allah (may He be Praised) has a great wisdom behind this order. He is Most Merciful and the Highest Judge. May Allah grant us success!

What is meant by hastening in the funeral

Q: Does hastening in the funeral refer to washing the dead and offering the Funeral Prayer?

A: It refers to walking in the funeral. It may also be tacitly applied to washing the dead person and offering the Funeral Prayer. The wording of the Hadith implies all of these meanings.

Ruling on delaying the funeral while the body is in the morgue refrigerator for several months

Q: What is the ruling on delaying a funeral while the body is in the mortuary refrigerators for six months, for instance?

A: If there is a necessity to do this, there is no harm in this according to the prevalent regulations.

Q: If a person who played an influential role in serving Islam died, is it permissible to delay their funeral for a day for example?

A: It is acceptable if the delay includes an interest as happened with the funeral of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who died on Monday but was buried on Wednesday. Thus, there is nothing wrong with doing this as long as it embraces an interest such as the attendance of the deceased's relatives or something like that.

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Warning against the Bida` observed in funerals

From `Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz to whoever reads this amongst Muslims, may Allah grant them and me success in achieving good, amen.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) to continue:

Many questions were repeated in the following issues, so I chose to alert and warn people against them for they are in conflict with the purified Shari`ah (Islamic Law):

First: Some people resort to putting mats which contain some Ayahs over the funeral biers. However, this act should be stopped and the warning against it should be reiterated since it subjects the Ayahs to contempt. Also, because some people may think that it benefits the deceased while it does not. Rather, it is a rejected misdeed that has foundation in the purified Shari`ah.

Second: Some of those who follow the funerals keep saying therein: "Say: La ilaha illa Allah (there is no deity but Allah), Say: Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]", and this is certainly a Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) that has no source in the purified Shari`ah. Rather, that which is prescribed when following a funeral is to remember the Hereafter, Death and seek

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Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness for the deceased. Yet, this should not be done out loud. Qays ibn `Abbad, the honorable Tabi`y (may Allah be merciful to him), said: The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) hated raising their voices in three (situations); funerals, dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and war.

Third: Some people tend to pronounce the Adhan (call to Prayer) and Iqamah (call to start Prayer) in the grave before burying the deceased and this is a rejected act of Bid`ah (innovation in religion) that has no origin in the purified Shari`ah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who does something that is a not part of this matter of ours (i.e. Islam) will have it rejected.﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Avoid novelties (i.e. in religion), for every novelty is an innovation and every innovation is a misguidance.﴿ Accordingly, this should be abandoned and people should be warned against doing it.

Fourth: Some people stand during the funeral in Al-Mudda`a District, in Makkah to recite Al-Fatihah, and this is also an act of Bid`ah that should be abandoned for what has previously been mentioned regarding the ruling on the third Munkar in which he (peace be upon him) said:

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﴾Anyone who does something that is a not part of this matter of ours (i.e. Islam) will have it rejected﴿ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾Avoid novelties..﴿

We ask Allah to grant all Muslims success in following the Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) in all their affairs and beware of all Bida` and Munkar acts, He is the Most Generous and Bountiful. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

Inscribing the word of Tawhid on graves is impermissible

Q: What is the ruling on inscribing the word of Tawhid (La ilaha illa Allah [there is no deity but Allah]) on some graves?

A: This is not permissible. It is only prescribed to dictate Talqin (encouraging someone dying to say: "La ilaha illa Allah"). The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ("Dictate to your Mawta (i.e., to say): La Ilaha Illa Allah") Related by Muslim .

Mawta here refers to the dying persons so as to let their last words be: "La ilaha illa Allah." But, it is not permissible to inscribe on their shrouds or graves.

Ruling on entering with the Funeral

from Al-Rahmah gate in Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy

Q: In Madinah, many people enter Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah) through Al-Rahmah gate while carrying the deceased. They do this because they believe that Allah (Glorified be He) may forgive and show mercy to the deceased for this reason. Is this act valid?

A: We know of no basis for such a belief. It is Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) and it is not permissible to believe in such a thing. There is no harm if the people enter the Masjid through any gate while carrying the deceased. However, it is better to enter through the gate which will not interrupt the worshippers.

Standing for the Funeral is an act of the Sunnah

Q: If a Muslim is inside a Masjid (mosque) and he sees a Funeral, should he stand up?

A: The explicit meaning of the Hadith is general and therefore doing so is recommendable and there is no

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harm if one does not do so. Standing up for the Funeral is an act of the Sunnah and is not obligatory, for it is reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so sometimes and neglected it at other times, which implies that this act is not an obligation. Allah is the One Who brings success. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and companions!

The ruling on standing up when seeing the funeral procession of a non-Muslim

Q: Is it permissible to stand up for the funeral procession of a non-Muslim?

A: Yes, It is permissible to stand for every funeral procession, for the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says: ﴾Whenever you see a funeral procession, stand up.﴿ According to some narrations: ﴾They said: O Allah's Messenger! This is the funeral of a Jew. He (peace be upon him) said, Was he not a human being?﴿ According to another wordings: ﴾We stood only for the angels.﴿ In another wording: ﴾Death is truly terrifying.﴿

The depth of the grave

Q: How deep should be the graves of men and women?

A: It is better for the grave to be equal to half a man's height. This is so in order to avoid being exhumed by animals or other creatures.

A Lahd is better than a Shaq

Q: Which is better: a Lahd (a crevice on the side of a grave facing the direction faced for Prayer) or a Shaq (a rectangular hole in the bottom of a grave in which the body is buried)? What is the appropriate depth of the grave?

A: In Madinah, people used to make Lahd sometimes and Shaq at other times. However, Lahd is better, because Allah chose it for His Prophet (peace be upon him). It is also permissible to make a Shaq, especially if it is needed. It was reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas that he said, (The Lahd is for us (Muslims) and the Shaq is for non-Muslims.) However, this Hadith is Da`if (weak), because its Isnad (chain of narration) included `Abdul-A`la Al-Tha`laby who was a Da`if narrator. The depth of the grave should be a span or so.

The manner of placing a deceased person in the grave

How should a deceased be situated in his grave?

A: The Hadith of `Abdullah Ibn Yazid shows that the deceased should be placed in the grave from

the rear opening of the grave. Then, he is to be drawn from the side of his head while laying him/her down on the right side and placing him in the direction of the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah). This is the best way that corresponds with the Sunnah. Also, it is an act of the Sunnah for the burier to say while placing the deceased, "Bismillah Wa `Ala Millat Rasulillah" (In the name of Allah, and following the religion of the Messenger of Allah).

The Manner of burial in the mountainous land

Q: Is it permissible to bury a deceased in a cave in mountainous land?

A: If is possible to dig a grave and surround it by stones, then it is better than burying the deceased in a cave. However, if this is not possible, then the deceased is to be buried in a cave which should be filled up with earth to protect the corpse from being devoured by beasts. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says, ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿

Using rocks, boards

or wood if there is no adobe

Q: If there is no adobe available, can we use rocks?

A: If there is no adobe, you should use rocks,

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boards, wood or any other thing to protect the dead body and then cover it with dust. Allah (Glorified be He) says, ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said, ﴾When I command you to do anything, do of it as much as you possibly can.﴿

The ruling on covering the grave of a woman after burial

Q: What is the ruling on covering the grave of women?

A: This is better.

Placing a woman in the grave is not restricted to Mahrams

Q: If there is a deceased woman who has no Mahrams (spouses or unmarriageable relatives), should anybody else put her in the grave?

A: There is nothing wrong with that even if her relatives are present, for those who placed the daughter of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in her grave were not Mahrams to her and he (peace be upon him) was present.

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Q: I am a disabled man and my leg was cut off and I had a wife that had a disease and was moved to one of the hospitals in the Kingdom. I stayed with her till she died and then we took her to the grave by ambulance. I accompanied her along with some of the workers in the hospitals. Those workers were not her Mahrams and they placed her in the tomb, for I could not do this owing to my disability. Am I sinful for this? What is the ruling on placing a woman in her grave by non-Mahram persons? Please, advise!

A: If some people who are not a Mahram to a woman placed her in the grave, there is no harm because the existence of unmarriageable man with a woman is only required upon traveling, not when placing her in the grave. May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on moving the dead person in the grave towards the Qiblah

Q: Is moving the dead person in the grave towards the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah) a Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) or something Mustahab (desirable)?

A: It is permissible according to the Hadith which states, (The Ka`bah is your Qiblah, whether in your lifetime or after your death.) The dead body should be placed towards the right side facing the Qiblah.

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Q: Brother A.M.E. from Khartoum says, "I noticed in a graveyard in my country that some of the graves, new and old, are not directed towards the Qiblah. There are some graves that are still not occupied. What is the ruling on this? May Allah reward you!

A: It is prescribed to direct the dead body towards the Qiblah, according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the Ka`bah, (It is your Qiblah, whether in your lifetime or after your death.) The grave-diggers and the Muslims in general should take care of this, according to the mentioned Hadith. May Allah guide the Muslims to all forms of goodness!

Ruling on uncovering the face of the dead when they are placed in the grave

Q: Is it permissible to uncover the face of the dead after placing them in the grave?

A: It is not permissible to uncover their faces. The face of the dead should be covered except for the Muhrim (pilgrim in the ritual state for Hajj and `Umrah) whose face and head should be uncovered because of the Prophet's saying when he was asked about the Muhrim

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who died on the Day of `Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah): (Bathe him with water (mixed with the leaves) of the lute tree and shroud him in his two (pieces of) cloth and, neither perfume him nor cover his head, for he will be raised on the Day of Recompense pronouncing Talbiyah (devotional expressions chanted at certain times during Hajj and `Umrah).) (Agreed upon its authenticity and the wordings are by Muslim)

Q: Is it permissible to uncover the face of the dead when they are placed in the grave?

A: It is not permissible to uncover the face of the dead when they are placed in the grave whether they are men or women but it is obligatory to cover them with the material they are wrapped in unless they are Muhrims; in that case their heads and faces should not be covered because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said regarding the person who died in the state of Ihram: (Bathe him with water (mixed with the leaves) of the lute tree and shroud him in his two (pieces of) cloth and, neither perfume him nor cover his head, for he will be raised on the Day of Recompense pronouncing Talbiya.) (agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) and the wordings are by Muslim.

If the deceased is a woman, her face must be covered with her shroud even if she is a Muhrim because her entire body is `Awrah (private parts of the body that must be covered in public).

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Q: Is there any legal proof on uncovering the face of the dead and placing a rock on their grave where people say it is his ornament?

A: There is no basis for this action in religion; it is rather an act of ignorance that has no basis.

Ruling on untying knots in the grave

Q: Is it permissible to untie the knots of the shroud in the grave?

A: This is the best thing to do as this was done by the Sahabah (the Prophet's Companions, may Allah be pleased with them).

Ruling on pronouncing Adhan and Iqamah

inside the grave when burying the dead

Q: What is the ruling on pronouncing the Adhan (call to Prayer) and Iqamah (call to start Prayer) inside the grave upon burying a dead person?

A: There is no doubt that this is a Bid`ah (innovation in religion) which was not prescribed by Allah,

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for such an act has not been reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) or any of his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) (may Allah be pleased with them). All good is attained by emulating their practices and following their path as Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾And the foremost to embrace Islâm of the Muhâjirûn (those who migrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah) and the Ansâr (the citizens of Al-Madinah who helped and gave aid to the Muhâjirûn) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allâh is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who innovates things in our affairs for which there is no valid proof will have them rejected.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). And in another narration: ﴾He who did any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf that is to be rejected.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say during the Friday Khutbah (sermon): ﴾And then, the best of the speech is embodied in the Book of Allah, and the best of the guidance is the guidance given by Muhammad. And the most evil affairs are their innovations; and every innovation is error.﴿

This Hadith was reported by Muslim in his Sahih (book of authentic Hadith) on the authority of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him).

What is to be said while burying the dead

Q: What is the ruling on saying: ﴿Thereof (the earth) We created you, and into it We shall return you, and from it We shall bring you out once again.﴾

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when burying the dead?

A: It is a Sunnah (a commendable act) to say this, in addition to: "In the name of Allah and Allah is the Greatest."

Reciting the Qur'an over the dust of grave

and then throwing it on the shroud of the deceased is an abhorred Bid`ah

Q: It is mentioned in the book of Al-Targhib Wa Al-Tarhib that whenever a person dies, a person at the grave should take a handful of the dust of his grave and recite on it some Ayahs, and then throw it over his shroud. It is believed that this will save him from being punished in his grave. What is the degree of the authenticity of this? May Allah reward you well!

A: This is baseless and an abhorred Bid`ah (innovation in religion) that is impermissible to do because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not prescribe it upon his Ummah (nation based on one creed). It is prescribed upon Muslims when a Muslim dies to wash him, wrap him in a shroud, offer Funeral Prayer for him and then bury him in the graves of Muslims. After finishing the burial, it is permissible for those attending the burial to supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) to grant him forgiveness and to make him firm on the truth following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who used to do so and commanded Muslims to do so. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on putting pebbles

on the grave and spraying it with water

Q: What is the ruling on putting pebbles on a grave and spraying it with water?

A: This is Mustahab (desirable) if possible because this fixes the dust and preserves it. It is related that the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was covered with small pebbles. It is desirable that the grave should be sprayed with water in order to fix the dust and so that the grave to remain obvious and known and not to be abused.

Ruling on moving a gravestone

from an old grave to a new one

Q: Is it permissible to move a gravestone from an old grave to a new one?

A: It is my opinion, according to Shari'ah (Islamic law), that this is impermissible because it is a mark for the preceding grave. When seeing it, people will pay due respect to the grave and take care not

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to walk, sit, or put rubbish on it. Moving such a gravestone means rendering the grave violable, whereas a new grave is in no need of it; rather, it can have another gravestone put on it. Even if there is no gravestone found, there is no harm if it remains without one if it is just one span higher than the surrounding earth to mark it as a grave. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on putting one pillar on

a woman's grave and two on a man's grave

Q: In some countries, one pillar is placed on a woman's grave and two on a man's grave. Does this have any basis in Shari'ah (Islamic law), even if it is just done to distinguish a woman's grave from a man's?

A: I do not know of any basis for this act in Shari'ah. The Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) is to make the graves equal in depth, burial, and appearance.

Ruling on marking graves

Q: Is it permissible to mark a grave?

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A: There is nothing wrong with marking a grave with a stone, a bone or a piece of metal. This act is not sinful because the Prophet (peace be upon him) marked the grave of `Uthman Ibn Mazh'wn.

Q: What is the ruling on marking graves?

A: There is nothing wrong with marking graves with a stone, a bone and so on, so that it is known whose grave it is. It is noteworthy that the mark should be free of any figures or writings. It was authentically narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade writing on a grave. Yet, there is no harm if the person marks the grave with a stone or applies yellow or black paint to the stone placed on the grave to distinguish it. It was reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) marked the grave of `Uthman Ibn Mazh'wn.

The ruling on numbering graves

Q: In some graveyards, people put numbers on the enclosures of cemeteries to identify the persons therein. What is the ruling on this issue?

A: Writing on graves is forbidden owing to feared temptation (of idolatry; as people may be tempted to worship those elegized dead people). However, it has not come to my knowledge that there is any blame regarding writing on it, but it is better to avoid it since it resembles writing on the graves in some aspects. May Allah grant us success .

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It is unlawful to put palm-leaves

or fresh cactus on the grave

Q: What is the ruling on putting fresh palm-leaves on the grave?

A: This is unlawful, and in fact it is a Bida`ah (a matter innovated in religion) for the Prophet (peace be upon him) put a palm-branch on two graves that Allah (Exalted be He) informed him of the torture people therein suffer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not put palm-branches on other graves, and this shows the impermissibility of putting such things on graves. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Whoever does any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, it is to be rejected.﴿ (Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih) .

Besides, he (peace be upon him) said, ﴾If anyone introduces in our matter (i.e. religion) something which does not belong to it, it is to be rejected.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) .

Similarly, it is not permissible to write on graves or to put flowers on them owing to the aforementioned two Hadiths and that the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade plastering graves, building over them, sitting on them and writing on them. .

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Q: What is the ruling of putting fresh palm-leaves and cactus on graves ?

A: This is not permissible, knowing that the Prophet (peace be upon him) put two palm-leaves on the graves of punished people when Allah (Exalted be He) informed him about their being tortured. Accordingly, this (conduct) is limited to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and it is not permissible to put anything on the graves, whether leaves of palm trees or of any other trees. May Allah grant us success .

Some Bid`ahs of burying the dead

Q: After burying the dead, some people recite Surah (Qur'anic chapter) Yasin at the grave and put some branches, such as aloe leaves, and plant the surface of the graves with barley or wheat, on the pretext that the Messenger (peace be upon him) put such things at the graves of two of his fellows. What is the ruling on this action?

A: It is not permissible to recite Surah Yasin or any other Surah over a grave during or after the burial. It is also impermissible to

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recite the Qur'an at graves because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not do this nor did the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Likewise, it is not permissible to pronounce Adhan (call to Prayer) or Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) at graves because this is Bid`ah (innovation in religion). It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who does any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected.﴿ (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih, Book of authentic Hadith) .

Likewise, it is not permissible to plant anything on graves, whether aloe, barley or wheat, since the Messenger (peace be upon him) did not do this, nor did the Rightly-Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them). As for his (peace be upon him) planting palm branches on two graves when Allah (Exalted be He) informed him that their owners were being tormented, this act was limited to the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding those two graves in particular, for he did not do this with any other grave. Indeed, Muslims should not innovate worship acts that Allah has not prescribed, based upon the Hadith quoted above and on the verse in which Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾Or have they partners (with Allâh — false gods) who have instituted for them a religion which Allâh has not ordained?﴿ May Allah grant us success .

a tree growing on a grave

is not evidence of the righteousness of the occupant

Q: I have noticed that if some people see a tree growing on a grave, they describe the occupant as having certain attributes. Does a tree growing on a grave indicate anything?

A: There is no basis to this, a tree or grass growing on a grave does not indicate the righteousness of the occupant. This is a false belief, as trees can grow on the graves of the righteous and also the evil, it is not specific to the righteous. One must not be deceived by claims to the contrary made by corrupt people and followers of false 'Aqidahs (creeds). And Allah is the One Whose help is sought.

Ruling on supplicating to Allah for the dead after burying them

Q: A. E. E. from Ta'if, says in his question: I notice that, after burying the dead, some people stand by the grave and supplicate for them. Is this permissible? Is there a prescribed Du'a' (supplication) to be said after burial and can it be done collectively, with one person reciting it

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and the others saying, "Amen" to the Du'a' or should people supplicate individually? Please give us a Fatwa (legal opinion issued by a qualified Muslim scholar) on this and may Allah reward you!

A: It has been shown from the authentic Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) prescribed a Du'a' to be said for the dead after the burial: ﴿When the Prophet (peace be upon him) finished burying someone who had died, he used to stand by the grave and say, "Seek forgiveness for your brother and beg steadfastness for him, for he is being questioned now."﴾ There is no harm in one person reciting the Du'a' and those listening saying, "Amen!" or everybody supplicating for the dead by themselves. May Allah grant us success!

Q: The injunction to supplicate for the deceased after burying them is mentioned in Hadiths. Do these injunctions indicate recommendation or obligation? We notice that people have abandoned this act of Sunnah or obligation after burial. What is your advice in this regard?

A: Supplicating steadfastness and forgiveness for the deceased after the burial is an act of Sunnah, and not an obligation, for (Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) finished burying a deceased, he used to stay with him (i.e. at his grave) and say (to the attendant Companions): Seek forgiveness for your brother, and beg steadfastness for him, for he is being questioned now.) May Allah grant us success .

Supplication of steadfastness for the deceased

is to be offered after finishing the burial

Q: When should a person pray to Allah (Exalted be He) to make the dead steadfast (during reckoning in the grave); should it be offered during the burial or after it?

A: It should be offered after finishing the burial, for ﴾Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) finished burying a deceased person, he used to stay with him (i.e. at his grave) and say, "Seek forgiveness for your brother and beg steadfastness for him, for he is being questioned now"﴿ It should be said when burying the deceased, ﴾"Bismillah wa `Ala Millati Rasuli-Allah" (In the name of Allah, and adhering to the way of Allah's Messenger)﴿ .

Making Talqin after the burial is Bida`ah

Q: What is the ruling on making Talqin after burying them?

A: Making Talqin act (dictating words to the already deceased person) is Bida`ah (innovation in religion) and groundless, and therefore it is not permissible to do it. It is mentioned only in some fabricated Hadiths. However, the proper time of Talqin (encouraging someone dying to say: "La ilaha illa Allah") is before death .

A suspicion concerning Talqin after burial and the answer to it

Q: What is your opinion regarding those who maintain that if the deceased hears the footsteps, then he hears Talqin (dictating words to the deceased person)?

A: Acts of worship should not be established by analogy but they are enacted by Allah (Exalted be He), and hearing the sound of footsteps neither harms nor benefits the deceased as when a person dies, he or she leaves worldly life, the abode of action, to the Hereafter, the abode of reward and his acts are sealed .

The ruling on giving Sadaqah on behalf of a deceased person during the burial

Q: Is lawful or not to give Sadaqah on behalf of a deceased person during the burial and have people recite Surahs of the Qur'an in return for a fee?

A: Praise be to Allah, it is not valid to offer Sadaqah (charity) on behalf of the deceased at his death as giving out charities was not limited in Shari`ah to this specific cases. All acts of worship are prescribed by Allah (Exalted be He), but if someone offers charity on behalf of a deceased person without restricting such an act to the hour of a person's death, it will not only be permissible, but it will also be an act of piety, by which the benefactor and the deceased will be rewarded based on what was mentioned in the following authentic Hadith (A woman died and then her son said: O Messenger of Allah, would she have a reward if I give charity on her behalf? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied:

Yes.) Besides, scholars have unanimously agreed that the deceased persons benefit from Sadaqah and Du`a' (given on their behalf). As for having people's recital of Qur'anic Surahs in return for a fee, this is impermissible whether it is done on behalf of a living or a deceased person because this is not reported in the purified Shari`ah. Here, Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah stated that he knows of no dispute among scholars regarding the prohibition of taking fees for reciting the Qur'an .

It was authentically reported that (He who does any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected) The same applies to reciting Qur'an on behalf of other (living) or deceased persons, even if it is done for free because this has no reliable basis in Shari`ah .

It is better to raise graves above the surface of the earth by approximately one span

Q: I see that many people, when burying a deceased person, raise the grave more than one span (above the earth's surface). If I forbid them, they say that this protects it (corpse) from rain. I also see them bring many pebbles and put them on top of the surface of the grave after burial. They also splash water onto it. What is the ruling on such practices?

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A: There is nothing wrong with any of this. It is better to raise the grave about a span over the earth's surface. Yet, if it is raised a little with pebbles, this is useful as a means of marking the graves so that people do not abuse it. However, if people inter the corpse at the bottom of the grave, put pebbles on it and splash water onto it to settle the dust, there is nothing wrong with any of this because it preserves the grave as well as its earth .

Q: To what extent can the grave be raised above ground level?

A: It is permitted to raise it about one span, knowing that the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is raised just one span (above the earth's surface). Thus, it is impermissible to raise it much more than that because it was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him): ﴿Spare no portrait unwiped out, and leave not a high grave unleveled.﴾ . Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih (Book of Hadith) .

The ruling on preaching at the graveside

Q: What is the ruling on preaching at the graveside?

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A: There is no harm in preaching at the graveside before burial. Surely, this is not Bid`ah (innovation in religion) since it was done by the Prophet (peace be upon him) as is mentioned in the Hadith reported by `Ali and Al-Bara' ibn `Azib (may Allah be pleased with both of them) .

Q: A brother from Al-Zulafy says in his question: Is there a proof of the permissibility of preaching at the graveside, since some people deny it. Please inform us, my Allah grant you a great reward .

A: It was authentically reported that many a time the Prophet (peace be upon him) preached to people at gravesides while they were waiting for the burial to be finished. Accordingly, it should be known that preaching at a graveside is permissible. It was done by the Prophet (peace be upon him), knowing that this involves reminding people of death, Paradise and Hellfire, and similar matters of the Hereafter. This also involves admonishing people to prepare themselves for meeting Allah. May Allah grant us success.

There is nothing harm in bringing cool water for people to drink at the grave

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Your Eminence, Grand Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, `Abdul-`Aziz Bin `Abdullah ibn Baz (may Allah protect and grant you a long life), As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you). **I have a question about someone who died on a hot day. As the people burying him were exhausted out of the hot weather, a kind man brought them cool water to drink. However, some of them labeled this act as a Bid`ah (innovation in religion) while others criticized it as impermissible. Is this act sinful? Please enlighten us. May Allah enlighten and safeguard you. (By `A. A. `A. `A) .**

A: As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh. There is nothing wrong with the act mentioned above. Rather, it falls under the category of benevolence and cooperation in goodness. May Allah grant all Muslims success.

Grand Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia `Abdul`Aziz ibn `Abdullah Ibn Baz

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The best of deceased people (entombed together) should be placed in the front towards the Qiblah

Q: How should two deceased people be buried in one grave ?

A: The best (more righteous) of them should be placed in the front, to be followed by the other one, and each of them should be lain on his right side facing the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah). If there is a need to bury a third body, there is no harm in this according to what was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the Muslims during the Battle of Uhud to bury two people and three people together in one grave. He also ordered that the person who had memorized a greater part of the Qur'an should be advanced towards the Qiblah.

The ruling on burying a dead man and a dead woman together in one grave

Q: Is it permissible to bury a dead man and a dead woman together in one grave?

A: There is no harm in doing so if there is a necessity, such as the presence of many dead people due to an accident or during a plague.

The ruling on specifying some parts of the graveyard for dead women

Q: Is it permissible to specify some parts of the graveyard for dead women and some others for dead men to facilitate identification of grave dwellers?

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A: As far as I know, there is no legal evidence regarding the permissibility of this action. Basically, a graveyard is intended for interment of both dead men and dead women [without separation between both] as this makes matters easier. Moreover, this has been the practice of Muslims starting from the time of our noble Prophet (peace be upon him) until today. During the Prophet's time, Al-Baqi` [the graveyard of Madinah, near the Prophet's Mosque] was assigned for interment of both dead men and dead women. Hence, all that is good is achieved through following the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his honorable Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and those who gracefully follow them.

It is permissible to bury the dead at night

Q: Is it permissible to bury the dead at night ?

A: It is permissible to bury the dead at night if their relatives are able to wash, enshroud and offer the Funeral Prayer for them, since the Prophet (peace be upon him) buried some of his Companions at night. Besides, he (peace be upon him) himself was buried at night and likewise Al-Siddiq (Abu Bakr), `Umar and `Uthman were buried at night. Hence, it is permissible to bury the dead at night, when the legal conditions are fulfilled. As for what was narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he forbade Muslims to bury the dead at night, scholars state that the Prophet's forbiddance was due to the case when burying the dead at night could lead to

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some negligence regarding the rights of the dead. Therefore, it was authentically related in Sahih Muslim on the authority of Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them both) that ﴾the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade burying a dead man at night without offering Funeral Prayer for him.﴿ Accordingly, if the Funeral Prayer is offered for the dead people, it becomes permissible to bury them at night. Allah is the Grantor of success.

Q: Is burying the dead by day better than burying them by night?

A: It is permissible to bury the dead during the day or at night according to the circumstances, except during the three times at which the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade us to pray [supererogatory prayers] or to bury our dead people. Such specification was stated in the Hadith related by `Uqbah ibn `Amir (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to forbid them to offer prayer or bury their dead at three times: 1. When the sun starts to rise until it has fully risen; 2. When the sun is at its height at midday till it has passed the meridian; and 3. When the sun draws near to setting till it has fully set.

The times at which burial of the dead is forbidden

. Q: Are there times at which burial of the dead is forbidden?

A: It was authentically reported that `Uqbah ibn `Amir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, ﴿There were three times at which the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to forbid us to pray or bury our dead. 1. When the sun starts to rise

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clearly until it has fully risen; 2. When the sun is at its height at midday till it has passed the meridian; and 3. When the sun starts to set till it has fully set.﴾ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih) Hence, Muslims are forbidden to either pray [supererogatory prayers] or bury the dead at these three times.

There is no difference between burial of the dead in Makkah or in any other place

Q: Does burial (of the dead) in Makkah differ from burial at any other place? Does it entail extra merits higher grades for the deceased?

A: Burial does not differ whether in Makkah or in any other place, since burial is the same in all places, namely that a hole should be dug about half of a man's stature while the deceased is lain in the direction of the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah). Besides, the deceased should be lain on his right side, an adobe should be put on the body and the openings of the grave should be blocked with mud. Then, dust should be heaped on him. The Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so with the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he died. This was also claimed by Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, "When I die

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dig a grave for me and put an adobe on me as was done with Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him). (Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih) It is an act of Sunnah to bury the person in his place (of residence) and not to bring him to Makkah or to any other place, just as the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Companions did, knowing that some of them died in Kufah, some died in the Levant (the region covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine), some died in Basra and others died in other countries, and it was not reported that they were brought to Makkah or to Madinah. None of them (may Allah be pleased with them) even stated it in their wills. The cause behind this is that the most important matter is people's deeds, not their place of burial. Besides, transferring the deceased involves hardship that is not justified by any legal reasoning. Moreover, if transfer of the deceased were ordained, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have recommended it, knowing that if this had happened, the Companions would have related and explained it, because they conveyed his Sunnah and illustrated what Allah (Exalted be He) legislated for His Slaves including the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his acts and all that he approved. Indeed, following the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions includes every goodness as Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says, ﴾Certainly, there has been in them an excellent example for you to follow﴿ He (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾And the foremost to embrace Islâm of the Muhâjirûn (those who migrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah) and the Ansâr (the citizens of Al-Madinah who helped and gave aid to the Muhâjirûn) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allâh is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.﴿ May Allah grant us success.

Burying a person in a Muslim country where he dies is an act of Sunnah

Q: Your eminence Shaykh `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz, General Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Head of the Council of Senior Scholars, may Allah keep you safe, grant you a long life and make your knowledge of benefit for Islam and Muslims. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh. We are seeking your advice and legal judgment regarding the present issue. Our nephew, who was Egyptian, passed away in Saudi Arabia, may Allah forgive his sins and have mercy on him. He was the only sustainer of his family and he always supplied them with their needs. He left behind a widow and fatherless children who are in dire need of benevolence and assistance. However, his family asked for transfer of his body to Egypt and his guarantor, upon receiving

such a request of the family, pledged to pay for necessary requirements to meet their request. Thus, what is your advice in such a case, as some people recommend that we bury him where he died and that we give his needy family the amount assigned for meeting the expenses of transferring his body? Please give us your advice. May Allah reward you greatly.

A: Wa-`alaykum as-salamu warahmatullah wabarakatuh. Since the deceased person passed away in a Muslim country, then burying him in the place where he died is preferable and congruous to the Sunnah of our great Prophet (peace be upon him). Besides, we have not heard that any of the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) had their bodies transferred from the place of death to any other place, even if to Madinah or any other place. Burying the deceased person in the place where he died would even involve another benefit, namely saving the expenses and giving the money assigned for the transfer of the body to his family. May Allah grant success to us all. Wa-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

The dead body of a non-Muslim should not be buried in the Arabian Peninsula, but rather it should be moved to another land

Q: A non-Muslim foreign worker died and his family asked the guarantor to transfer the dead body (to his homeland) at his cost. As this will result in removing the intestines, mummifying and placing the dead body in a coffin,

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the guarantor will incur a huge cost. Is it permissible for him to pay no attention to the family's request and bury the dead person in the place of his death? A: A deceased Muslim, whether he is a worker or not, should be buried in the Muslim cemetery located in the land where he dies. It is indeed impermissible to move the dead body to another place in case this entails any of the forms of mutilation referred to above. For, the Muslim must be respected, whether he be alive or dead. However, if the transfer of the body involves Shari`ah-related matters that could be missed if the deceased is not transferred, there is nothing wrong with transferring it provided that the dead body is not mutilated. With regard to the non-Muslim worker, his burial in the Arabian Peninsula is forbidden. If possible, his dead body should be moved to another land because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the Muslims to drive the non-Muslims out of the Peninsula, saying, ﴾No two religions should exist together in the Arabian Peninsula.﴿ May Allah grant us success.

The ruling on executing the will of a deceased person that he be buried in a town other than the one where he dies

Q: If a deceased person had requested in his will that his body be buried in a certain town, is it

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obligatory to execute his will?

A: It is not obligatory to execute his will, and it is better to bury him in the Muslim town where he dies. All praise is due to Allah.

Q: A Muslim brother from Riyadh asks: Some people, especially the aged, who have lived in Riyadh as permanent residents request in their will that their bodies be buried in their birthplaces, knowing that such places may be more than a hundred kilometers away from Riyadh. Moreover, the Funeral Prayer may be offered for the deceased persons twice; once in Riyadh and the other time in the places where they will be buried. Is this compatible with Shari`ah? Is it obligatory for the heirs to execute such a will?

A: It is better to bury such persons in the towns where they die, if it is a Muslim country, and their heirs are not obliged to execute their will that they be buried in another place, since there is no legal evidence for the permissibility of transporting a dead person to be buried in another town. Moreover, this contradicts the actions of our righteous Salaf (Muslim predecessors) and incurs great expenses. Allah is the Grantor of success.

ruling on building over graves

Q: I noticed that some graves in my country have cement cast on them, which is a meter long and half a meter wide.

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The name of the dead, date of the burial, and some beautiful phrases, such as "O Allah! Have mercy on so-and-so," are written on them. What is the ruling on this?

A: It is not permissible to build a cast or anything else over a grave, nor is it permissible to write on them. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade building and writing on graves. This is related by Muslim (may Allah be merciful to him) on the authority of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade the plastering of graves, sitting on them, and building over them.) It is also related by Al-Tirmidhy and others, with a Sahih (authentic) Isnad (chain of narrators); and he added: (...and inscribing on them.) This is a form of exceeding proper limits, which must be forbidden, because writing on graves may lead to adverse consequences such as exaggerated reverence, and other acts prohibited by the Shari'ah (Islamic law). Graves should instead be covered with earth and raised about one span above the ground, so it is known to be a grave. This is the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet)

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regarding graves that was followed by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and his Sahabah (Companions, may Allah be pleased with them). It is not permissible to build Masjids (mosques) over them, cover them with a cloth, or build domes over them, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians; they have taken the graves of their prophets as places of worship.") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim as Sahih [a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish]) It was also related by Muslim in his "Sahih (Book of Authentic Hadith)", on the authority of Jundub ibn 'Abdullah Al-Bajaly, that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), five days before his death, saying, ("Allah (may He be Exalted) has taken me as a Khalil (Bosom Friend) as He took Ibrahim as a Khalil. Were I to have taken any of my Ummah (nation) as a Khalil, I would have taken Abu Bakr as a Khalil. Beware! Those who preceded you used to make the graves of their prophets and righteous people places of worship. Do not take graves as places of worship; I forbid you to do that.") There are many Hadith with this same meaning. We ask Allah to make the Muslims successful in adhering to the Sunnah of their Prophet (peace be upon him) and keep them steadfast upon it and aware of what contradicts it. He is All-Hearer, Ever-Near.

The legal way of restoring a grave when it is ruined

Q: There is a tomb that was ruined and I want to dig and rebuild it, but since it contains bones (mortal remains). What should I do with these bones? And is it permissible to use gravel and cement or baked bricks and cement (in restoring it)?

A: If a tomb falls down, its earth should be restored to it and it should be leveled off like other graves. However, it is not permissible to build and plaster a grave, for it was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in the Hadith narrated by Jabir ibn `Abdullah Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with them both) who said, ﴾The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade plastering graves, sitting on them, and building over them.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih) Moreover, plastering graves and building over tempts people to excessively revere them and supplicate to them instead of supplicating to Allah (Exalted be He) Alone, which already happened with many people when their tombs were glorified and domes and mosques were built over them. The result is that people would worship people entombed in these graves through supplicating them, calling them for help, seeking blessings from them and asking them for help. This is done

by many people at the grave of Al-Husayn, and the grave of Al-Badawy and other graves. It was authentically reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Allah cursed the Jews and the Christians for they used the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) It is reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Um Salamah and Um Habibah (may Allah be pleased with them both) that they told the Prophet (peace be upon him) that they saw a church in the land of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) which contained pictures, and he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When a pious person among those people died, they would build a place of worship on their graves, and then would decorate it with such pictures. They will be the worst of creatures on the Day of Judgment in the sight of Allah (may He be Exalted).﴿ Moreover, it is reported in Sahih Muslim on the authority of Jundub ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Verily, Allah has taken me as His Khalil (Closest Fellow), as He took Ibrahim (Abraham) as His Khalil. Had I taken any one of my Ummah as a Khalil, I would have taken Abu Bakr as such. Be careful of the deeds of those who preceded you as they used to take the graves of their prophets and righteous men as places of worship. Indeed, you must not take graves as mosques; I forbid you from doing that.﴿ There are many other Hadiths

in this regard. Accordingly, it is necessary for all Muslims - whether governments or peoples - to fear Allah (May He be Glorified), and to keep away from excessive reverence of graves, from building over them and from using them as places of worship. The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade this and

we should obey him to avoid the bad consequences of building over graves. For, it is a means to excessive reverence of the dead, invocation of them, seeking their protection, and requesting their help, which is a major Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship). This Shirk was practiced by the disbelievers of Quraysh and other disbelievers among Arabs and non-Arabs. Allah (Exalted be He) removed this Shirk by virtue of the Da`wah (call) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Jihad and the Jihad of his Companions and those who followed them from the Imams of guidance and the callers of Monotheism. May Allah make us among them for He is the One Who guarantees success!

It is not permissible to bury the dead in a Masjids (mosques)

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother H. `A. M, (May Allah grant him safety!) May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you. In reference to your kind message in which you ask for some books and the answer to the question you sent, we thank you for your interest and zeal and we are delighted to fulfill your wish by sending a copy of Zad Al-Ma`ad, Al-`Aqidah Al-Wasitiyyah supplemented with the commentary of Muhammad Khalil Al-Harras, Al-Qa`idah Al-Jalilah by Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, and Fath Al-Mjid supplemented with the commentary of Al-`Aqidah Al-Tahawiyyah by Ibn Abu Al-`Iz. As for the question, it is obligatory to forbid people to bury their dead in the Masjid, and to level the place they have prepared for burial. You should seek the help of Allah and then the efforts of scholars in persuading people that this is an impermissible act, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians, for they took the graves of their prophets as Masjids (places of worship).﴿ This Hadith is reported as authentic by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

from `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her). This is also grounded on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying, ﴾Be careful, for those who preceded you used to take the graves of their prophets and righteous men as places of worship. Thus, you must not take graves as Madjids; I forbid you to do that.﴿ Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith from the Hadith of Jundub ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him). It is also related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) from `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that Um Salamah and Um Habibah (may Allah be pleased with them) told the Prophet (peace be upon him) about a church they had seen in the land of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in which there were pictures. Thereupon, he (peace be upon him) said, ﴾When a pious person among those people died, they would build a place of worship on his grave, and then would decorate it with such pictures. They would be the worst of creatures on the Day of Judgment in the sight of Allah.﴿ These Hadiths and the like indicate the prohibition of building Masjids on graves and placing graves inside Masjids, because this is a matter of major Shirk (associating others in worship with Allah). It is related in Sahih Muslim from Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them both) that he said: ﴾The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade the plastering of graves, sitting on them, and building over them.﴿ Building on graves, plastering, and placing covers on them, offering prayer there, and building Masjids over them are all

means leading to Shirk. May Allah grant Muslims safety from doing that and make them understand their religion, help them hold fast to the Shari`ah of Allah and stick to it. May Allah guide the scholars to educate and direct people to goodness in the light of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet, for Allah is the All-Hearing, the All-Respondent. I ask Allah to guide and help you to all good,

for He is the best to be asked. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!).

President of the Administration of Scientific Researches, Ifta', Da`wah and Guidance

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Burying the dead in Masjids is a means to polytheism

In the Name of Allah. All praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon the Prophet of Allah, his family, Companions and whoever gracefully follows his guidance. I read what was published in Khartoum Newspaper on 17 Rabi` Thany, 1415 A.H. about burying Mr. M. H. A. beside his father ('s body) in their Masjid in the city of Um Durman. As Allah has ordained Muslims to advise each other and to deny all evil deeds, I intend to assert that burying the dead in the Masjid is impermissible. Moreover, it is regarded a means to polytheism and one of the practices of the Jews and the Christians that caused them to be condemned by Allah and cursed by His Prophet (peace be upon him). It was reported in the two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) from `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, (May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians, for they have taken the graves of their Prophets as places for worship.) Besides, Muslim mentioned in his Sahih that Jundub ibn

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`Abdullah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, (Those who came before you took the graves of their Prophets and righteous people as places for worship. Do not take graves as places for worship, for I forbid you from doing that.) There are many other Hadiths that indicate this meaning. Hence, it is obligatory for Muslims - rulers and subjects - to obey Allah and avoid what He has prohibited. They must bury their dead people outside Masjids, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) used to do so. As for the existence of the graves of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his two Companions [Abu Bakr and `Umar] (may Allah be pleased with them) in the Prophet's Masjid in Madinah cannot be used as evidence that it is permissible to bury people inside Masjids. This is because Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his two Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) were not buried in the Masjid. They were buried in the house of `Aishah, but his two Companions were buried with him when the Masjid was expanded by Al-Walid ibn `Abdul-Malik, as the room was incorporated into the Masjid, by the end of the first century A.H. However, some scholars advised Al-Walid not to do so, but he saw no reason to stop the expansion, as the matter was quite unambiguous. Hence, it is clear that the Prophet (peace be upon him)

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and his two Companions were not buried in the Masjid; rather, the room in which they were buried was incorporated into the Masjid because of the expansion. In a word, what Al-Walid did is not an evidence for going against the Ever-Glorious Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Consensus of our righteous scholars. The words stated above were written on 14 Jumada Al-Awwal, 1415 A.H. to advise people and to acquit myself before Almighty Allah. Allah is the Grantor of success. Peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his Companions, their followers and those who followed them faithfully.

`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz, Grand Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, President of the Council of Senior Scholars and Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta'.

The ruling on building Masjids near graves

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to His Eminence the honorable brother: M.S.As-salamu `Alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you)In reference to your question registered in the Administration of Scientific Research and Ifta' No. 2191, dated 10 Jumada Thany,1407 A.H. in which you ask about: 1. The ruling on building a Masjid (mosque) near the graves for the benefit of people of the graves. 2. The ruling on offering Salah (Prayer) there. 3. The ruling on offering Salah in Masjid that contains a grave. I inform you that it is not permissible to build Masjids on the graves just as it is not permissible to build them near the graves for the benefit of the dead. However, if the graves are built outside the Masjid and there is a path - or something similar to it - that separates both, and the Masjid is not built for these graves, there is no harm in offering prayer therein. May Allah guide us all to that which pleases Him. As-salamu `Alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh. **Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance**

The ruling on offering Salah in Masjids that contain graves

Q: Is it permissible for Muslims to offer Salah (Prayer) in Masjids (mosques) that contain graves?

A: It is not permissible to offer Salah in Masjids that contain graves, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) cursed the Jews and Christians who took the graves of their Prophets as places for worship.

The ruling on offering Salah in Masjids which contain graves

Q: Brother M. A. N. from Mit Tarif - Daqahliyyah - Egypt, asks: It is permissible to offer Salah (Payer) in Masjids (mosques) that contain graves ?

A: Offering Salah in the Masjids which contain graves is not permissible. The graves must be exhumed and the mortal remains must be moved to public cemeteries, knowing that the mortal remains in each grave should be placed in a special hole like all graves. Besides, it is not permissible to leave the graves

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in Masjids, whether graves of pious persons or of others, because the Messenger (peace be upon him) prohibited and warned against it. He also cursed the Jews and Christians for it. It was authentically reported that he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾May Allah curse the Jews and Christians, for they took the graves of their prophets as places of worship.﴿ Commenting on this Hadith, `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: ﴾He was warning against what they did.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). He (peace be upon him) - when informed by Um Salamah and Um Habibah about a church in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) which contained paintings - said: ﴾When a pious person among those people died, they would build a place of worship on his grave, and then would decorate it with such pictures. They would be the worst of creatures on the Day of Judgment in the Sight of Allah.﴿ (Agreed upon as authentic). The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Beware of the deeds of those who preceded you, since they used to take the graves of their prophets and righteous men as places of worship. Surely, you must not take graves as places of worship; for I forbid you to do that.﴿ Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadiths from Jundub ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly. Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited taking graves as places of worship, and cursed those who do so, stressing that they are the worst of creatures. So, it is obligatory to avoid such practice. It is well-known that those who offer Salah at a grave would be taking it as a Masjid and those who build a place of worship over a grave would be taking it (the grave) as a Masjid.

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Hence, it is obligatory to keep the graves away from Masjids and not to build graves there in obedience to the command of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and avoidance of the curse inflicted by Almighty Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) on those who build Masjids over graves. Indeed, when a person offers Prayers in Masjids that contain graves, Satan may prompt him to supplicate to the dead, seek their help, or prostrate to them. Thus, such a person commits major Shirk (associating others with Allah in worship). Moreover, this is an act of the Jews and Christians, and thus it is obligatory that we oppose them and keep away from their evil way and their misdeeds. However, if the graves are established earlier than the Masjid itself, it is obligatory to demolish and raze the Masjid because it is the one built later. This is stated by scholars is in an attempt to eliminate the means to polytheism and block the ways leading to it. **Here springs a suspicion that is utilized by the grave worshippers,** namely that the Prophet's (peace be upon him) grave is in his Masjid. **In reply to that suspicion, we affirm that** the Companions (may Allah be pleased

with them) did not bury him in his Masjid, but they buried him in the house of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her). Yet, when Al-Walid ibn `Abdul-Malik expanded the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Masjid by the turn of the first century, he included the rooms in the Masjid, though this was a mistake on his part. Some scholars even condemned it, but still he thought that it was acceptable for the purpose of expansion. Hence, it is not permissible for Muslims to quote this act as evidence on the permissibility of building Masjids on graves or on burying the dead inside Masjids, because this contradicts authentic Hadiths

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and because it is a means leading to Shirk; associating the dead with Allah in worship. May Allah grant us success!

Prayer in a Masjid that includes one grave is equal to prayer in another that includes two or more graves

Q: Some people say that the ruling on offering Salah (Prayer) in a Masjid (mosque) that includes a grave is different from that on offering Salah in another Masjid which includes two or more graves, is this true? What is the ruling in light of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying, (May Allah curse **the Jews and Christians,** for they took the graves of their prophets as places of worship) **, knowing that some of those who come from Madinah introduce as evidence on the validity of offering Salah inside Masjids containing graves the existence of the graves of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his two Companions inside Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah), because it is like all other Masjids, regarding the permissibility of offering Salah therein? Please illustrate the issue for us . A:** The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) cursed those who build Masjids over graves, and warned Muslims not to do it. He (peace be upon him) said, (Indeed, those who preceded you used to take the graves of

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their prophets and righteous men as places of worship, so be careful not to take the graves as Masjids; I forbid you to do that) . (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith) . It was also related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that (Um Habibah and Um Salamah (may Allah be pleased with them) mentioned to the Prophet (peace be upon him) a church that they had seen in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) that had pictures in it. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "When a pious person among those people died, they would build a place of worship on his grave, and then would decorate it with such pictures. They will be the worst of creatures in the Sight of Allah.") So, the Prophet (peace be upon him) indicated that those who build Masjids over the graves are the worst of creatures in the Sight of Allah, and he warned against what they do. This ruling applies to the Masjids that include one or more graves. If the Masjid is built over the graves, it is permissible to demolish it and the graves should be marked without having any building over them just like the graves established during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon be upon him) in Al-Baqi` and elsewhere. Nowadays, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the graves are marked, but no buildings, domes, or Masjids are built over them; all praise is due to Allah for that. However, if a person is buried inside a Masjid, then the grave should be exhumed and the remains should be moved to a public cemetery where there are no

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domes, Masjids, or any other buildings over it. Thus, the Masjid is cleared from graves, and people are allowed to offer Salah in it. As for those ignorant people who claim as evidence for its permissibility that the graves of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his two Companions lie inside the Prophet's Masjid, this cannot be taken as evidence. For, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and his two Companions, Abu Bakr and `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) were buried in his [Prophet's] house, not in his Masjid. However, during the expansion made by Al-Walid ibn `Abdul-

Malik ibn Marwan, the house was included in the Masjid. Yet, this was a mistake which should not have been made, and thus ignorant people should not take it as evidence. Scholars have even condemned this action. Hence, it is not permissible for Muslims to take this as evidence on building Masjids on graves or on building graves inside Masjids, because the house of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was apart from the Masjid and it was included later due to expansion. Still, the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is separated from the Masjid by a wall and a barrier. Thus, a Muslim should clarify this issue to his fellow Muslims so that they would not make such a mistake. May Allah grant us success.

It is impermissible to offer Salah in a Masjid that contains a grave even if it be the only Masjid in town

Q: If the Masjid that contains a grave is the only one in town, is it permissible for Muslims to offer Salah in it?

A: The Muslims should never pray in such a Masjid. Rather, they should pray in another Masjid or at home, if all the Masjids [in town] contain graves. Besides, Muslim rulers should exhume the graves that are in the Masjids and transfer the corpses - if they are newly buried - to public cemeteries to be buried there in special graves which surface, like that of all other graves, is leveled. However, the Masjid should be demolished if the grave was built first, since the Prophet (peace be upon him) cursed the Jews and Christians who took the graves of their prophets as places for worship. Moreover, (When informed by Um Salamah and Um Habibah (may Allah be pleased with them) that they saw a church in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) which had pictures in it, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to them, "When a pious person among those people died, they would build a place of worship on his grave, and would then decorate it with such pictures. They would be the worst of creatures on the Day of Judgment in the Sight of Allah.) (Agreed upon as authentic by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Hence, whoever offers Salah in Masjids that contain graves, his prayer is void and he should repeat it, due to the two Hadith quoted above and to other Hadiths having the same meaning.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his two Companions were not buried in the house of `Aisha

Q: It is well-known that it is not permissible to bury the dead in a Masjid, and that it is not permissible to pray in any Masjid where there is a grave. So, why were the graves of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and some of his Companions incorporated into Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Masjid in Madinah) ?

A: It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, (May Allah curse the Jews and Christians, for they took the graves of their prophets as places for worship) Agreed upon as authentic by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. It was also authentically reported from `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) that Um Salamah and Um Habibah (may Allah be pleased with them) mentioned to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) a church which they had seen in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and which had pictures in it, and that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) then said, (When a pious person among those people died, they would build a place of worship on his grave, and would then decorate it with such pictures. They would be the worst of creatures on the Day of Judgment in the Sight of Allah.) Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. Besides, Muslim reported in his Sahih from Jundub ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly

that he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say, (Allah has taken me as a Close Fellow (Khalil) as He took Ibrahim as a Close Fellow, and if I were to take anyone among my Ummah as a close fellow, I would have taken Abu Bakr. as a close fellow. Indeed, those who were before you took the graves of their Prophets and righteous people as places of worship. So, do not take graves as places of worship, for I forbid you to do that) .

Muslim also reported from Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said, (The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade plastering the graves, sitting on them and building over them) .

These authentic Hadiths and others indicate that it is prohibited to build Masjids over graves, and that those who do that are cursed. They also indicate that it is prohibited to establish buildings over graves, to erect domes over them or to plaster them, because these actions are means to polytheism and worshipping those engraved instead of Allah, which took place in earlier in recent times.

So the Muslims, wherever they may be, must avoid that which the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade, and they should not be deceived by what many people do. For, truth is the objective of the believer, and he should follow it whenever he finds it, knowing that it is based on evidence from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, not on people's deeds and opinions. In addition, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his two Companions (Abu Bakr and `Umar, may Allah be pleased with them) were not buried in the Masjid. Rather, they were buried in the room of `Aisha. However, when the Masjid was expanded during the time of Al-Walid ibn

`Abdul-Malik, the room was incorporated into the Masjid, at the end of the first (Hijri) century. This action thus is not considered as burial in the Masjid, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his two Companions were not moved to the area of the Masjid, but the room in which they were buried was incorporated into the Masjid for the purpose of expansion. Hence, no one can use this incident as evidence to the permissibility of establishing buildings over graves, taking graves as places of worship, or burying dead people inside Masjids, due to the authentic Hadiths quoted above which indicate that it is forbidden. As for what Al-Walid did, it does not constitute an evidence on the permissibility of what contradicts authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). May Allah grant us success.

A reply to the suspicion raised by those who permit Salah in Masjids containing graves

Q: Those who permit Salah in Masjids (mosques) which contain graves hold as a proof that Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Masjid in Madinah) contains the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him); what do you think of this?

A: It should be explained to him that the Prophet's grave is in his house, not in the Masjid, and that incorporation of the house into the Masjid is the fault of those who did that.

Ruling on turning a Musalla into a graveyard

Q: What is the ruling on turning the Musalla (praying-place) for Salat-ul-'Eid (the Festival Prayer) into a graveyard, because it has become inside the town, and it is next to the original graveyard?

A: For matters like this, you should refer to the court for it to judge on this matter according to the Shari'ah (Islamic law).

Ruling on inscribing on graves

Q: Is it permissible to place on graves metal strips or inscriptions that contain Ayhas (Qur'anic verses), names of the deceased, death date and so on?

A: It is not permissible to inscribe on the grave, neither Qur'anic Ayahs nor anything else, whether on metal, on a sign or on anything else. This is because of the prohibition given in the authentic Hadith narrated by Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them both), stating: ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade plastering

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graves, sitting on them and building over them.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book]) Al-Tirmidhy and Al-Nasa'y added through an authentic Isnad (chain of narrators): ﴾... and inscribing on them.﴿

Ruling on writing the Du‘a’ of entering graveyards on the gate

Q: What is the ruling on writing the Du‘a’ (supplication) to be recited on entering a graveyard on the gate of the graveyard?

A: I do not know of any basis for this in the Shari‘ah (Islamic law). The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade writing on graves, and I am afraid that writing on the gate of the graveyard might be a means that will lead to writing on the graves themselves.

The ruling on lighting up the graves

and the roads between them

Q: Is it permissible to light up the graves and the roads between them ?

A: It is permissible to light up the graves or place lamps on their walls, if the purpose is to guide people when burying the dead.

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Indeed, there is no harm in placing lanterns and lamps over graves, as Ibn `Abbas narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) (cursed women who (frequently) visit graves and those who build mosques and place lights on them.) Accordingly, there is no harm in placing lights in the streets leading to the graves, or placing lamps to light up the graves when burying the dead.

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Dedicating good deeds to the deceased

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The deeds permissible and impermissible to be dedicated to the deceased

Q: Do the good deeds we dedicate to the dead reach them?

A: Only the deeds named by the Shari'ah (Islamic law) as reachable to the dead will reach the dead; the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("When a person dies, their works (righteous acts) come to an end, apart from three: Sadaqah Jariyah (ongoing charity), beneficial knowledge, or a pious child who supplicates for them.") (Related by Muslim in his "Sahih [Book of Authentic Hadith]") There are other Hadith that carry the same meaning. These deeds include: Sadaqah (voluntary charity), Du'a' (supplication), Hajj, 'Umrah, and beneficial knowledge left by the deceased.

As for dedicating Salah (Prayer), recitation of the Qur'an, Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka'bah), or voluntary Sawm (Fasting) to the dead, I do not know of any basis for this; what is dictated by Shari'ah is not to do so, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Anyone who does an action which is not in accordance with this matter of ours (Islam) will have it rejected.") (Related by Muslim in his "Sahih")

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Q: Is it permissible to dedicate some good deeds to the deceased?

A: It is permissible to dedicate only the deeds specified by Shari'ah, such as Sadaqah, Du'a', repaying debts, Hajj, and 'Umrah, if the person on whose behalf Hajj is to be performed is dead or incapable due to old age or an incurable illness. The same condition applies to 'Umrah. This was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in many Hadith, and it is also mentioned in the Qur'an that it is permissible to supplicate to Allah for the Muslims, whether they are alive or dead, such as when Allah (Glorified be He) says: (And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("When a person dies, their acts come to an end, apart from three: Sadaqah Jariyah (ongoing charity), beneficial knowledge, and a pious child who supplicates for them.") It was also authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that (A man came

and said, "O Messenger of Allah! My mother died suddenly without making a will, but I believe that if she were to speak, she would give Sadaqah (voluntary charity). Will she have a reward if I give Sadaqah on her behalf?" He (peace be upon him) said, "Yes.") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It was also authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) (that a man asked,

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"O Messenger of Allah! Is there left from acts of piety towards my parents something I can by it show kindness to them after their death?" He (peace be upon him) said, "Yes! To invoke blessings upon them, beg forgiveness for them, fulfill their pledge after them, honour their friend, and join the ties of the womb (kinship) that are only maintained through them.") May Allah grant us success!

The evidence on specifying certain deeds, to the exclusion of others, for the benefit of the deceased person

Q: What is the proof on the permissibility of specifying certain deeds, to the exclusion of others, for the benefit of the deceased person?

A: These matters are Tawqifiyyah (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion) and there must be evidence in order to act upon them, since the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾If anyone introduces in our matter (i.e. religion) something which does not belong to it, it will be rejected.﴿ Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The ruling on giving out charity and performing Hajj on behalf of a person who was used to slaughtering animals for other than Allah (Exalted be He)

Q: A man says that he was informed that his father was used to slaughtering (sacrificial animals)for other than Allah (Exalted be He), and he (questioner) now wants to give out charity and perform Hajj (Pilgrimage) on the behalf of his father, attributing such practice of his father to lack of advice on part of scholars and advisers. What is the ruling on this?

A: If the father was known for his goodness, adherence to Islam and righteousness, it is not permissible to take such reports for granted unless they are transmitted by people known for their unquestionable truthfulness. Besides, it is an act of the Sunnah to supplicate Allah (Exalted be He) for the father and to give out charity on his behalf. However, if the questioner knows with certainty that his father died while committing Shirk (associating others with Allah in worship) and this knowledge is endorsed by the testimony of two or more trustworthy and upright people - who bear witness that they saw his father slaughter for other than Allah (Exalted be He) of dead or other people or that they heard him supplicate to other than Allah (Exalted be He) -, then, he should stop supplicating for him and his matter is for Allah (Exalted be He) to decide. This is based on the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) sought Allah's Permission to invoke forgiveness for his mother but Allah (Exalted be He) did not permit him though she died in the pre-Islamic era on the religion of the disbelievers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also asked Allah for permission to visit her and Allah (Exalted be He) allowed him. This indicates that whoever dies on the religion of the disbelievers, even if due to lack of knowledge, it is not allowable to supplicate for them or to ask forgiveness, give out charity or perform Hajj on their behalf.

As for those who die in a place where Da`wah to Allah (Exalted be He) had not reached,

their affair is for Allah to decide. The most authentic of the sayings of scholars is that they will be tested on the Day of Judgment and if they obey (the commands) they will enter Paradise, but if they disobey they will enter Hell. This opinion is grounded on authentic Hadiths in this regard.

Parents' dinner

Q: Brother (...) from Riyadh asks: We often hear about what is called "Parents' dinner", which is offered in many ways; either by making a special dinner in Ramadan and inviting some poor and laborers to it, or serving it to fasting people who break their fast in the Masjid, or even slaughtering an animal and distributing its meat among the poor and neighbors. If this is permissible, which is the optimal way to do it?

A: Giving out Sadaqah (voluntary charity) on behalf of parents or other relatives is permissible, for ﴿when he was asked: Is there anything I can do to continue honoring my parents after their death? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Yes, you can pray for them, ask Allah's forgiveness for them, carry out their last promises after their death, do good to their friends and uphold the ties of kinship which you would not have upheld were it not for them.﴾

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He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴿Indeed, the best of good deeds for a son is to uphold ties with his father's friends.﴾ ﴿Besides, when a man asked him, "My mother died without making a bequest, will she be rewarded if I give out charity on her behalf?", he (peace be upon him) said: Yes.﴾ This is also maintained by his (peace be upon him) saying: ﴿When a man dies, his acts come to an end, but for three, a recurrent charity, knowledge which benefits others, or a righteous pious child who prays for him (for the deceased)﴾ .

There is nothing wrong in calling this Sadaqah "Parents' Sadaqah" or " Parents' dinner", whether it is offered in Ramadan or at any other time. May Allah grant us all success and guide us to do whatever pleases Him.

Determining a fixed time to feed the poor on behalf of the dead is an abhorred Bid`ah

Q: A Muslim, who has many children, died leaving behind much property for them. Is it permissible for them to slaughter some sheep or bake some bread on the seventh or fortieth day on behalf of the deceased dedicating them to him and gathering Muslims to eat this food?

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A: It is permissible to give in charity, feed and provide for the poor and the needy, do good to neighbors and do all acts of beneficence and goodness that is made desirous by Islam on behalf of the deceased person. However, slaughtering sheep, cows, camels, birds or the like at the time of death or on a certain day thereafter, such as the seventh or fortieth day, on Thursday, on Friday or on the night of death, on behalf of the deceased person is a Bid`ah (innovation in religion). It has never happened during the time of our Salaf (righteous predecessors) (may Allah be pleased with them). Undoubtedly, a Muslim has to avoid such Bid`ahs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who innovates things in our affairs for which there is no valid (reason) (commits sin) and these are to be rejected.﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Avoid novelties, for every novelty is an innovation, and every innovation is an error.﴿

Slaughtering for one's father and grandfather every year

Q: I have a cousin who slaughters an animal on behalf of his father and grandfather every year. I advised him many times but he said that

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he inquired about this issue and came to know that there is no sin in doing so. Please guide me. Is what he says correct or not?

A: If this person slaughters an animal throughout the four days of `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) on behalf of his father or grandfather with the intention to offer sacrifice, then there is no harm in doing so. If he slaughters an animal at any time intending to give charity to the poor on their behalf, then there is no harm in doing so, because charity benefits both the living and the dead, whether it is meat or something other than meat, i.e. money, food, and the like. All these things benefit the living and the dead. It is authentically narrated from Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) that he (... was asked about giving charity on behalf of one's mother after her death; will she receive a reward for that? He (peace be upon him) said: Yes.)

Furthermore, it is related in the Sahih Muslim (may Allah be merciful with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (When a person dies, their acts come to an end, but three, recurring charity, or knowledge by which people benefit, or a pious son (or daughter), who prays for them (for the deceased).)

In conclusion, giving Sadaqah (voluntary charity) in behalf of the deceased is beneficial to them according to the consensus of Muslim scholars. The same applies to supplicating Allah (Exalted be He) for them. Thus, a person can slaughter an animal on behalf of his father, grandfather, or anyone else, whether intending to offer it as charity or as a sacrifice to be slaughtered throughout the four days of `Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice) to help them draw nearer to Allah (may He be Exalted and Glorified). But, it is not allowed for him to appoint a fixed day or month other than the four days of `Eid-ul-Adha, for this sacrifice, except when focusing on the honored times

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like Ramadan and the first nine days of Dhul-Hijjah. There is a reward for the dead as well as the person offering the sacrifice according to the degree of their sincerity to Allah (Exalted be He) and the lawfulness of their earnings. On the contrary, if such a person does so intending to draw nearer to the dead as done by those sacrificing for the dead, the sun, the moon, or Jinn (creatures created from fire), then, this will be considered an act of major Shirk (associating others in worship with Allah in His Divinity or worship), because it is not permissible for any one to draw close to any person through slaughtering, vowing, or any other act of worship that is due to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) because He (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "Verily, my Salât (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allâh, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists).) ("He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.") And, (Verily, We have granted you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم)

Al-Kauthar (a river in Paradise).﴾ ﴿Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only).﴾ In addition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Allah curses whomever slaughters (a sacrifice) to other than Allah...﴾ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih).

Thus, slaughtering for the Jinn (creatures created from fire), the dead, or other creatures, such as idols, planets, and so on, whether the slaughterer hopes for their intercession or believes that they benefit them or save them from an illness or such like, this is Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) and Shirk (associating others in worship with Allah in His Divinity or worship). Consequently, whoever slaughters on behalf of their father or grandfather believing that they can benefit them, cure a patient, or draw them closer to Allah is the same as the person who slaughters for the sun, the moon, or the stars. All such acts are types of Shirk (associating others in worship with Allah). We supplicate to Allah to grant us safety!

Dedicating the reward of Tawaf to others is impermissible

Q: Brother N.A.B., from Tamir, asks: When I travel to Makkah Al-Mukarramah to perform Hajj or `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage), is it permissible for me to perform the seven rounds of Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah) and dedicate their reward to my dead mother? Please guide me, Your Eminence Shaykh!

A: I know of no Shar`y (Islamic legal) evidence supporting or giving grounds to the permissibility of doing so. It is well-known that acts of worship are Tawqifiy (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion) matters. Therefore, I view it impermissible to perform a voluntary Tawaf on behalf of others, for there is no evidence supporting doing so. However, it is permissible for you while performing Tawaf to supplicate to Allah for your parents as well as other Muslims based on the general nature of Shar`y evidence to this effect. May Allah grant us all success!

Ruling on performing Tawaf and reciting the whole Qur'an on behalf of the deceased

Q: Sometimes I perform Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah) on behalf of one of my deceased relatives, my parents or my grandparents. What is the ruling on doing so? Moreover, what is the ruling on reciting the whole Qur'an on their behalf? May Allah reward you well!

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A: It is better not to do so as it is not substantiated by any evidence. However, it is permissible to give in charity on behalf of whichever relative of yours or others you like, provided that they are Muslims. You may, likewise, supplicate to Allah for them and perform Hajj or `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) on their behalf. As for performing Salah (Prayer) or Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah) on behalf of them, it is better not to do so as it is not supported by any evidence. However, some scholars considered doing so permissible drawing an analogy on the permissibility of giving in charity and supplication. Nevertheless, it is more precautionary not to do so as the basic principle regarding acts of worship is their being Tawqifiy (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion) matters. May Allah grant us success!

Salah or recitation of the Qur'an may not be dedicated to anyone

Q: My mother is illiterate and can neither read nor write. Is it permissible for me to recite the Qur'an and perform supererogatory Salah (Prayer) and dedicate the reward of doing so for her? If not, what acts can I do and dedicate their reward to her? May Allah reward you well!

A: There is no Shar`y (Islamic legal) evidence to the effect of the permissibility of dedicating the reward of offering Salah and reciting the Qur'an to others, whether they are dead or alive. Actually, the acts of worship are Tawqifiy (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion) matters. However, it is permissible for you to supplicate to Allah for her and give in charity on her behalf. Moreover, you may also perform Hajj or `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) on her behalf in case she is so aged and incapable of performing them.

Ruling on offering Salah on behalf of dead parents

Q: A sister giving herself the title Umm Muhammad, from Riyadh, asks: Is it permissible to offer Salah (Prayer) on behalf of dead parents? If yes, how should it be offered? Guide us, may Allah reward you well!

A: It is not permissible for sons and daughters to offer Salah on behalf of either their dead parents or anyone else. Rather, it is permissible for them to supplicate to Allah for them, ask forgiveness for them and give in charity on their behalf. Moreover, it is permissible for them to perform Hajj or `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) on their behalf. As for Salah, it is impermissible for anyone to offer Salah on behalf of anyone else. Actually, Janazah (funeral Salah) may only be offered for a dead Muslim before burial. If no Janazah is offered before burial, it may be offered after burial within the period of maximum one month. In this regard, (The Prophet (peace be upon him) offered funeral Salah at the grave of the mother of Sa`d ibn `Ubadah after a month of her burial.)

The same also applies to the two-Rak`ah supererogatory Salah of Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah) in that it may be offered by anyone performing Tawaf, including one performing Hajj or `Umrah on behalf of others. In the case of the latter, it is permissible for him to offer a two-Rak`ah Salah following Tawaf. The basic principle in this regard is that all acts of worship are Tawqifiy (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion) matters. May Allah grant us success!

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Dedicating the reward of reciting the Qur'an to others

Q: Is it permissible for me to recite the whole Qur'an dedicating its reward to my parents, bearing in mind that they are both illiterate? Is it also permissible to recite the whole Qur'an dedicating its reward to a literate person? Also, is it permissible for me to recite the whole Qur'an dedicating its reward for more than one person?

A: There is no indication in the Qur'an, Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or quotations from the Companions (peace be upon them) to the effect of the permissibility of dedicating the reward of reciting of the Glorious Qur'an to parents or anyone else. Actually, Allah (Exalted be He) enjoined reciting the Qur'an so as to be benefited therewith, its meanings to be contemplated and to be acted upon. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾(This is) a Book (the Qur'ân) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember.﴿ He (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Verily, this Qur'ân guides to that which is most just and right﴿ Moreover, He (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Say: "It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing."﴿ Furthermore, the Prophet

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(peace be upon him) said: ﴾Recite the Qur'an, for on the Day of Resurrection it will come as an intercessor for those who recite it.﴿ He (peace be upon him) said to the same effect: ﴾On the Day of Resurrection, the Qur'an and those who acted according to it will be brought with Surah al-Baqara and Al 'Imran preceding them as two clouds or two shades, or two flocks of birds in ranks, pleading for those who recite them.﴿

This is to say that the Qur'an has been revealed to be acted upon, reflected on and recited frequently and thus, doing an act of worship is not to be dedicated to the dead or others. In fact, I know of no reliable evidence to the effect of dedicating it to parents or anyone else. Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who did any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected.﴿ However, some scholars view that it is permissible to do so. They view that it is unobjectionable to dedicate the reward of reciting the Qur'an or of any other good deed to others drawing analogy with giving in charity on behalf of and supplicating to Allah for the dead or others. However, the first opinion is the sound one based on the quoted above Hadith and other Hadith to the same effect. Had dedicating the reward of reciting the Qur'an to others been possible, the Salaf (righteous predecessors) would have done so. Moreover, analogical deduction may not be applied to acts of worship as they are Tawqifiy (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion)

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matters based on the quoted above Hadith and other Hadiths to the same effect.

As for giving in charity on behalf of the dead and others, supplicating to Allah (Exalted be He) for

them and performing Hajj or `Umrah on their behalf by someone who has already performed them on his own behalf as well as making up for missed days of Sawm (Fast) on behalf of the deceased, all such acts are authentically authorized by the Prophet (peace be upon him) if the one on whose behalf such acts are performed is dead, aged or chronically ill. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on charging a fee for reciting Qur'an over the dead

Q: A questioner from Yemen asks: People here recite Qur'an over the deceased persons and receive a fee in return for this. Do the dead benefit from this by any means? When one of them dies, the people recite Qur'an for three days, holding feasts and banquets, is this prescribed in the Shari`ah (Islamic law)?

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A: Reciting the Qur'an over the dead is an act of Bid`ah (innovation in Islam), and charging a fee in return for this is impermissible. There is no indication of this in the purified Shari`ah (Islamic law), and all acts of worship are not to be offered except in accordance with the prescriptions of Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever introduces something into this affair of ours [i.e., Islam] that is not of it, it will be rejected.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) The same also applies to sacrificial offerings, and holding feasts for the deceased as doing so is a rejected Bid`ah; whether done on one day or more. This has not been prescribed in the purified Shari`ah (Islamic law). Rather, it is an act of Jahiliyyah (pre-islamic time of ignorance). It has been authentically proven that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Four unabandoned customs of Jahiliyyah are in my Ummah (nation of creed); boasting of noble descent, impugning lineage, seeking rain by stars, and wailing.﴿ And ﴾If a wailing woman does not repent before her death, she will be made to stand on the Day of Resurrection wearing a robe of tar and a garment of mange.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih).

It was also narrated on the authority of Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: ﴾We used to regard gathering with the family of the deceased and making food after their burial as (equivalent to) wailing (for the deceased)﴿

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(Related by Imam Ahmad with a Hasan (good) Isnad (chain of transmission), which includes the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Four unabandoned customs of Jahiliyyah are in my Ummah﴿ as previously mentioned in the Hadith. Neither the Prophet (peace be upon him), nor the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) (may Allah be pleased with them) used to recite the Qur'an over the deceased after their passing away. Moreover, they did not slaughter animals, hold feasts or banquets, for all these are acts of Bid`ah. Therefore, it is necessary to beware of these practices and people should be warned against them. Scholars in particular, should forbid people from doing what Allah (Exalted be He) has prohibited. Also, they should reprimand the ignorant and impudent persons until they abide by the right path prescribed by Allah (Exalted be He) for His Servants. Doing so will result in the reformation of societies and the prevalence of Islamic rule which will abolish such practices of Jahiliyyah. It is permissible for relatives and the neighbors to prepare food for the bereaved family as they will be occupied with the calamity that has befallen them. It was authentically reported that when the news of the death of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) reached the Prophet (peace be upon him) he commanded his family ﴾to prepare food for

the family of Ja`far and he (peace be upon him) said: Today they are busy.") (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) through an authentic Isnad (chain of narrators). We ask Allah to grant guidance and success to all Muslims, for He is the Most Generous and Bestower of Good!

Ruling on dedicating the reward of doing good deeds to the living or the dead

Q: My mother cannot read. Wanting to be dutiful to her, I used to recite the Qur'an gifting the reward for her. However, when I heard that this act is not permissible, I gave it up and began giving Sadaqah (voluntary charity) on her behalf. She is presently alive, but does the reward of Sadaqah, be it money or something else, reach her whether she is alive or dead? Or, is it only the Du`a' (supplication) that reaches her as reported in the Hadith which states: (When a slave (of Allah) dies, their acts come to an end but three...) **where the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned:** (one of them is a pious child, who prays for them (for the deceased).) **Does this Hadith indicate that a person who frequently makes Du`a' (supplication) for their parents in Salah (Prayer) and outside it, sitting and standing, is righteous and will hopefully be rewarded by Allah? Kindly advise me. May Allah reward you with the best!**

A: The scholars differed about whether or not the reward for reciting the Glorious Qur'an reaches the deceased. There are two opinions of which the most likely is that it does not reach the deceased, for there is no evidence to this effect. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) did not do this for his deceased relatives such as his daughters who died during his lifetime,

nor did the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them), as far as we know. Therefore, it is preferable that the Mu'min (believer) refrains from reciting the Qur'an, either for the dead or the living, or offering Salah or Sawm (Fast) for them, for there is no evidence to support any of these deeds. Acts of `Ibadah (worship) are based upon Tawqif (a religious text and not personal opinion), except for what is authentically reported by Allah (Exalted be He) or His Messenger (peace be upon him) to be Shar`y (Islamically lawful). Charity and Du`a' benefit the living and the dead according to the consensus of Muslim scholars. The Hadith makes mention of the dead only, for this was the questionable matter: Will it benefit them or not? Hence, the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) came to confirm this: ﴾When a slave (of Allah) dies, their acts come to an end but three, Sadaqah Jariyah (ongoing charity), knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious child who offers Du`a' for them.﴿ As it was known that one's deeds come to an end upon their death, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) pointed out certain things that do not come to an end. Undoubtedly, the living person benefits from the Sadaqah (voluntary charity) and Du`a'. Thus, making Du`a' for living parents benefits them, as much as charity benefits them while they are alive. Similarly, performing Hajj on their behalf benefits them if they are unable to perform it due to old age or an incurable disease. It is authentically reported that: ﴾A woman came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah! The obligation of Hajj enjoined by Allah upon His Servants has become due on my father when he is an old man and cannot sit firm on the back of a mount. Can I perform Hajj on his behalf?' He (peace be upon him) said: 'Yes, perform Hajj on his behalf.'﴿

Another man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and told him: ﴾O Messenger of Allah! My father is an old man who is unable to perform Hajj or bear the hardship of travel. Should I then perform Hajj and `Umrah for him? He said: Perform Hajj and `Umrah on behalf of your father.﴿ This indicates that it is permissible to perform Hajj on behalf of the dead or those unable due to old age, be they men or women. Thus, giving Sadaqah, making Du`a' and performing Hajj or `Umrah on behalf of the dead or the unable living person benefits them according to all scholars.

Likewise is making up for the missed Sawm on behalf of the dead, if the Sawm is Wajib (obligatory), whether for a vow or Kaffarah (expiation) or Ramadan, for the generality of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: ﴾If anyone dies in a state (that he had to make up for) some days of Swam, their heir should fast on their behalf.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) There are many Hadiths to the same effect. However, whoever delays Sawm in Ramadan due to a Shar`y excuse, such as illness or travel, and then dies before making up for them, there is no need to make up for the Swam they missed or to feed a poor person, since they are excused. As for you, dear questioner, you are doing good In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills) by being dutiful to your parents and giving Sadaqah and making Du`a' for them.

This is especially true if the child is righteous, as their Du`a' is more likely to be accepted. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"or a pious child, who prays for them (for the deceased),"﴿ since the pious child is more likely to have their Du`a' answered than a wicked one. Nevertheless, making Du`a' is required from both, but the Du`a' of the righteous one is more likely to be accepted.

Ruling on reciting Qur'an on behalf of a deceased at their house

Q: Does the reward of reciting Qur'an on behalf of the deceased benefit them? This occurs when the acquaintances and neighbors of the deceased gather at his or her house, and each one of them recites a Chapter of the Qur'an without taking any fees in return. After finishing the recitation, they make Du`a' (supplication) for the deceased and grant them the reward of recitation. Please advise on this, as I have heard several scholarly opinions in this regard varying between absolute prohibition, reprehensibility and permissibility.

A: This act and other similar acts have no origin, as it has not been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) or any of his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) (may Allah be pleased with them) that they ever used to recite Qur'an on behalf of the deceased. Yet, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who does something that is a not part of this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) will have it rejected﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic book of Hadith), it was also related by Al-Bukhari who decisively classed it as a Hadith Mu`allaq (a Hadith missing link in the chain of narration, reported directly from the Prophet) in the Sahih). Furthermore, it is related in the two Sahihs on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who innovates something in this matter of ours [i.e., Islam] that is not part of it, will have it rejected﴿ Also, in Sahih Muslim on the authority of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say in his Khutbah (sermon) on Friday: ﴾To continue, the best of speech is embodied in the Book of Allah, and the beet of guidance is the guidance given by Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the most evil affairs are their novelties; and every innovation is a going astray﴿ Al-Nasa'y -with a Sahih Isnad (authentic chain of narrators)- added : ﴾and every going astray is in Hellfire﴿ Giving Sadaqah (voluntary charity) on behalf of the deceased and making Du`a' for them, reaches and benefits them according to Ijma` (consensus of Muslim scholars). Allah is the Source of success and the One to be sought for help.

Bringing famous Qur'an reciters to recite for the deceased is a Bid`ah

Q: Some people in our village bring proficient Qur'an reciters to recite. They claim that this benefits the deceased and brings mercy upon them. Some may call in one or two Shaykhs to recite over the grave of the deceased. Others may set up a great ceremony where they invite one of the most famous reciters to commemorate the anniversary of a person's death through loudspeakers. What is the Islamic ruling on this issue? Does the recitation of Qur'an benefit the deceased over the grave or at any other place? What is the best way to benefit the deceased? Please provide us with an answer. May Allah reward you well and accept our sincerest appreciation and gratitude!

A: Praise be to Allah! To continue: this is an impermissible act of Bid`ah (innovation in religion), for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who innovates something in this matter of ours [i.e., Islam] that is not part of it, will have it rejected﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim). In addition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Anyone who does something that is a not part of this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) will have it rejected﴿ (Related by

Muslim in his Sahih (authentic book of Hadith). There are also many other Hadith mentioned to the same effect.

Furthermore, it is not the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or the way of his Rightly-Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them), or those who followed them to recite Qur'an over the graves or commemorate the anniversary of a person's death. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾And the foremost to embrace Islâm of the Muhâjirûn (those who migrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah) and the Ansâr (the citizens of Al-Madinah who helped and gave aid to the Muhâjirûn) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allâh is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I urge you to follow my Sunnah and that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Stick to them, hold fast to them, and beware of novelties, for every novelty is an innovation, and every innovation is a going astray﴿ .

It is also authentically reported that he (peace be upon him) used to say in his Khutbah (sermon) on Friday: ﴾To continue, the best of speech is embodied in the Book of Allah, and the best of guidance is the guidance given by Muhammad. And the most evil affairs are their novelties; and every novelty is a going astray﴿ There are numerous Hadiths mentioned in this regard.

Over and above, the Prophet (peace be upon him) pointed out in many Hadiths that which benefits a person after his death, so he (peace be upon him) said:

《When a man dies, his acts come to an end, except three, recurring Sadaqah (voluntary charity), or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (i.e., for the deceased)》 (Related by Muslim in his Sahih). A man also asked him (peace be upon him) saying: 《O Messenger of Allah! Is there any thing I can do to continue honoring my parents after their death? He (peace be upon him) said: Yes, you can pray for them, seek Allah's forgiveness for them, carry out their last wishes after their death, do good to their friends and uphold the ties of kinship which you would not have upheld were it not for them.》 The last wishes mean the will made by a person before their death. Therefore, one of the things a person can do to honor them is to fulfill this will as long as it complies with the Shari`ah (Islamic law). Other ways of honoring parents is to give in Sadaqah (voluntary charity) on their behalf, make Du`a' (supplication) for them, and to perform Hajj and 'Umrah (Lesser Pilgrimage)on their behalf. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on reciting Al-Fatihah in behalf of a deceased and slaughtering cattle for them

Q: What is the ruling on reciting Al-Fatihah on behalf of the deceased, slaughtering cattle and paying money to the bereaved family?

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A: Drawing nearer to the deceased by slaughtering animals, paying money, vowing and other acts of worship such as to seek healing or support from them, appeal to them, are major acts of Shirk (associating others in worship with Allah). It is not permissible for any person to do this, for Shirk is one of the most grievous sins. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾Verily, Allâh forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills﴿ He (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Verily, whosoever sets up partners (in worship) with Allâh, then Allâh has forbidden Paradise to him, and the Fire will be his abode.﴿ In addition to His Saying (Exalted be He): ﴾But if they had joined in worship others with Allâh, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them.﴿ There are many other Ayahs mentioned to the same effect.

Therefore, it is obligatory to sincerely single out Allah with worship such as slaughtering cattles, vowing, making Du`a' (supplication), observing Salah (Prayer), Sawm (Fast) and other acts. One of the forms of Shirk is to draw nearer to the inhabitants of the graves through vowing or offering food for the previously mentioned Ayahs, and according to Allah's Saying (Exalted be He): ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "Verily, my Salât (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allâh, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists).﴿ ﴾"He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims."﴿ As for reciting Al-Fatihah or other Ayahs of the Qur'an on behalf of their deceased, there is no evidence for this. Accordingly, it should be abandoned since there are no authentic reports from the Prophet (peace be upon him) or from his Companions

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proving this act. However, it is permissible to make Du`a' (supplication) for the deceased and give in charity on their behalf by being kind to the poor and Miskins (needy). This is a way by which a servant can draw closer to Allah (Glorified be He) and give its reward to their parents, and deceased or living persons, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When a man dies, his acts come to an end, except three, recurring Sadaqah, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (i.e., for the deceased).﴿ It is also authentically reported that a man told him (peace be upon him): ﴾O Messenger of Allah, my mother died and left no will. Would she have a reward if I gave charity in her behalf? The Messenger said: Yes.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim). The same applies with respect to performing Hajj and `Umrah (Lesser Pilgrimage) on behalf of the deceased, as well as repaying their debts, for all this benefits them according to the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) evidence mentioned in this regard. However, if the questioner means doing good to the bereaved family by giving them Sadaqah (voluntary charity) in terms of money or slaughtered animals; this is acceptable if they are poor. Yet, it is better for neighbors and relatives to prepare the food at their houses and give it to the bereaved family, for it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴾when he was informed of the death of his paternal cousin Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) in the battle of Mu'tah, he ordered his family to make food for the family of Ja`far, and said: Because there has come to them that which shall overwhelm them.﴿ As for

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the bereaved family's making food to the people for the deceased's sake, this is not permissible, and is an act of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance), whether it takes place on the first, fourth, tenth day or at any time throughout the year. It is authentically reported on the authority of Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly one of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: ﴾We used to consider sitting with the bereaved family and making food after burial as a sort of wailing﴿ .

On the other hand, if guests lodge with the bereaved family during the mourning period, there is nothing wrong in making food for them by way of hospitality. Also, there is nothing wrong if the bereaved family invites whoever they want of their neighbors and relatives to join them in eating the food that has been given to them. May Allah grant us success!

There is no evidence on the desirability of reciting Qur'an on behalf of the deceased

Q: Does the reward of reciting the Qur'an reach the deceased? What is the text of the Hadith in which it is said: O Messenger of Allah, Is there anything I can do to continue honoring my parents after their death?

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A: There is no evidence that reciting the Qur'an on behalf of the deceased is Mustahab (desirable) as far as I am concerned. Therefore, it is safer to abandon this act. Rather, a person should suffice with that which Allah (Exalted be He) has prescribed such as making Du`a' (supplication) for them, giving Sadaqah (voluntary charity) on their behalf, in addition to other acts prescribed in the Purified Shari`ah (Islamic law) such as performing Hajj, `Umrah (Lesser Pilgrimage) and repaying debts, for all this benefits the deceased. As for the text of the Hadith you have asked about: ﴾A man said: O Messenger of Allah! Is there any thing I can do to continue honoring my parents after their death? He said: Yes, you can pray for them, seek Allah's Forgiveness for them, carry out their last wishes after their death, do good to their friends and uphold the ties of kinship which you would not have upheld were it not for them﴿ May Allah grant us success! Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When a man dies, his acts come to an end, except three, recurring Sadaqah, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (i.e., for the deceased)﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih).

Furthermore, it is related in the two Sahihs that a man told the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying: ﴾O Messenger of Allah! My mother died and left no will. Would she have a reward if I gave charity on her behalf? The Messenger said: Yes.﴿

Ruling on dedicating the reward of reciting the Qur'an to the soul of the Messenger (peace be upon him)

Q: What is the ruling on dedicating the reward of reciting the Qur'an to the Messenger (peace be upon him)?

A: Dedicating the reward of reciting the Qur'an to the soul of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or to the dead in general is baseless and impermissible. This was never done by the Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them), and the blessing lies in following them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is given a reward similar to that of ours for whatever good deeds we perform, because it is he (peace be upon him) who directed us to do so. He (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever guides to something good, for him is a reward similar to that of its doer.﴿ It is he (peace be upon him) who guided his Ummah (nation) towards goodness. Whenever a Muslim recites the Qur'an, offers Salah (prayer), fasts or gives something in charity, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is given an equal reward, because it is he who led us to perform these deeds. There is no need to dedicate the reward of recitation or anything else to him, as this is unsubstantiated as previously mentioned. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

﴾Whoever performs an action not in accordance with our religion it will be rejected.﴿ The same applies to reciting the Qur'an for the dead; it is groundless and must be abandoned.

As for giving charity on behalf of deceased Muslims and supplicating Allah (Exalted be He) for them, all this is permissible. Allah (May He be Exalted) described His righteous servants who follow the righteous predecessors saying: ﴾And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith"﴿ Allah (Exalted be He) has prescribed the Funeral Prayer to supplicate for the dead and appeal to Him to bestow mercy on them. Giving charity on behalf of the dead also benefits them, as affirmed by the authentic Hadiths narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him). In addition, Hajj, 'Umrah (Lesser Pilgrimage) and paying debts on behalf of the deceased Muslim is beneficial to them.

Ruling on reciting al-Fatihah (Opening of the Book) for all the dead and the living after performing Salah

Q: Is it permissible to recite Al-Fatihah (Opening of the Book) for the sake of all the dead and living people; I mean the prophets, martyrs, Auliyâ' of Allâh (i.e. those who believe in the Oneness of Allâh and fear Allâh much, and all the believers and relatives after finishing Salah or at any other time?

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A: This act has no origin in Allah's Purified Shar` (Law). It is not permissible to recite Al-Fatihah (Opening of the Book) for the sake of any person because this was not reported either from the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor from the Companions. Thus, this is baseless. Though some scholars stated that there is no harm in dedicating the reward for recitation to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as others. Yet this opinion is not substantiated. It is safer to leave that because acts of `Ibadah (worship) are Tawqifiy (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who did any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected.﴿ Yet, a person should send much prayers on the Prophet (peace be upon him) and should frequently supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) for his parents and relatives because Du`a' (supplication) benefits them.

As for reciting Al-Fatihah (Opening of the Book) or any other part of the Qur'an for the Prophet (peace be upon him) or others, this is not permissible according to the strongest of the two opinions of scholars based on mentioned above Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who did any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected.﴿ May Allah grant us success!

The Ruling on making up missed Prayers on behalf of the deceased

Q: Is it permissible to offer obligatory prayers that were missed by the deceased?

A: Offering prayer on behalf of a deceased person is not permissible and has no evidence.

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This is because doing acts on the behalf of the deceased is only reported in Sawm (Fast), Hajj (Pilgrimage), paying debts, giving in charity and supplication but there is nothing concerning offering prayers.

The deceased person takes the advantage of the Mushaf if he makes it Waqf

Q: If the deceased left behind a Mus-haf (Arabic copy of the Qur'an), will he receive a reward when his children recite it?

A: If the deceased left behind a Mushaf, it will benefit him if he makes it Waqf (endowment) and in this case he will take a reward for this and similarly if he assigned useful books which contain legal sciences or any other science which is useful to people. A person is rewarded for this because he is helping goodness. Likewise, if a person endowed a piece of land, a house, or a shop and the profit is given to the poor or a sum of money is given to a mosque, all this entails a reward. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in an authentic Hadith: ﴾When a man dies, his acts come to an end except three matters; recurring charity, or knowledge that benefits, or a pious son, who supplicates for him (for the deceased).﴿

Recurrent charities benefit a deceased Muslim and

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likewise the supplications of his sons and others. If a person allocates some useful things for the Sake of Allah (Exalted be He), such as a house, a piece of land, a shop, some palm trees and the like, it will benefit him. He will take the advantage of Waqf if people benefit from it by making use of it or spending its profit in mosques by renewing their furniture and constructing them.

Visiting graves is of three kinds

Q: What is the ruling on visiting graves, Tawassul (seeking to draw closer to Allah through unlawful means) through shrines, and taking sheep and money for Tawassul when visiting, for example, Al-Sayyid Al-Badawy, Al-Husayn, and Al-Sayyidah Zaynab? Please provide us with your beneficial answer. May Allah reward you well!

A: Visiting graves is of two kinds:

First: That which is permissible and even recommended. It is to visit graves to supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) to forgive the dead and ask Him (Exalted be He) to bestow mercy on them, and to be reminded of death and prepare oneself for the Hereafter. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Visit the graves for they remind you of the hereafter.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as

his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them) used to visit graveyards. However, it is not permissible for women to visit graves. Rather, they have to be prevented from doing so for it is authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that he cursed women who visit graveyards. Moreover, if women visit graves, this may cause

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Fitnah (temptation) to them or to others because of their impatience and quick display of sorrow. Therefore, it is impermissible for them to follow funeral processions to graveyards as it is authentically reported that Um `Atiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: ﴾We were forbidden to follow the funeral procession, but this was not stressed to us.﴿ This Hadith indicates that women are prevented from following funeral processions for fear of Fitnah and impatience.

The things that are forbidden by the Prophet (peace be upon him) are generally considered Haram (prohibited) - unless there is a proof to change the rule - for Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).﴿ On the other hand, the Funeral Prayer is permissible for both men and women as stated by some authentic Hadith which are reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and the Companions. As for the saying of Um `Atiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her): "... but this was not stressed to us"; it does not indicate that women are permitted to follow funeral processions because the Prophet's (peace be upon him) prohibition is enough as a proof of forbiddance. As for her saying: "He (the Prophet) did not stress on us not to do so" ; it is based on her Ijtihad (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings) and thought which can not be used as proof against the Hadith.

Second: That which is tantamount to Bid`ah (innovation in religion). It is to visit graveyards to supplicate to those lying in them or seek help from them or offer sacrificial animals or take vows for their sake. This second type is considered Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) and major Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship)- may Allah protect us. It is also strictly prohibited to visit graves to

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offer Salah (Prayer) or recite Qur'an there. Such practices are impermissible and regarded as different forms of Bid`ah. Consequently, there are three ways to visit graveyards:

First type: To visit graveyards to supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) in favor of the dead or to remember the Hereafter. This type is permissible.

Second type: To visit graveyards to recite Qur'an, offer Salah, or slaughter animals by them. This is Bid`ah (innovation) and a form of Shirk.

Third type: To visit graveyards to offer sacrifices for the dead, draw closer to them through this, to make Du`a' (supplication) to the dead, not to Allah, or to seek their help, support, or protection. This is major Shirk- may Allah protect us. We must avoid these innovated visits. It makes no difference whether the dead person is a prophet, a pious person or anyone else. Thus, the same prohibition applies to what some ignorant do at the Prophet's grave (peace be upon him) such as supplicating and seeking help from him or at the grave of Al-Husayn, Al-Badawy, or Shaykh `Abdul-Qadir Al-Jilany, and so on. May Allah help us all!

The ruling on Tawassul in the name of the dead and visiting graves

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Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and may Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions. **I was asked about the ruling on Tawassul (supplicating to Allah in the name of the dead) and visiting graves,** to which I gave the following answer:

If by visiting graves one intends to supplicate to the dead, draw closer to them through offering them sacrifices, make vows for them, and invoke them instead of Allah, this is considered an act of major Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship). The same applies to the so-called Awliya' (pious people), whether they are dead or alive. If people think that the Awliya' cause benefit, bring harm, answer their Du`a' (supplication) or cure their illnesses, all such practices are a form of major Shirk. We seek refuge with Allah from that. Such practices resemble those done by the Mushriks (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) with Al-Lat, Al-`Uzza, Manah and other idols and gods of theirs.

Those in positions of authority and scholars in Muslim countries should deny such practices and teach the people the parts of Shari`ah (Islamic law) that are deemed indispensable. They also have to eliminate such acts of Shirk and prohibit laypeople from performing them.

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Moreover, they should pull down the domes above the graves, because they are a Fitnah (temptation) that might lead to Shirk, and because they are prohibited. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) prohibited building over graves, plastering them, sitting on them, or offering Salah (Prayer) by them. He also cursed those who establish Masjids (mosques) by them. Therefore, no Masjids or any other buildings are to be built over them. Rather, they should protrude without any buildings over them like the graves of the early Muslims in Madinah and in every Islamic country that has not been affected by Bida` (innovations in religion) and personal inclinations.

It is an act of the Sunnah (a commendable act) to visit graves with the intention of remembering the deceased, supplicating to Allah (Exalted be He) and asking His Mercy for the dead, for men so long as no journeys are undertaken. This is according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Visit the graves, for they remind you of the Hereafter.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith). The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾taught his Sahabah (Companions) to say on visiting graves, "Peace be upon you, O, believing inhabitants of this graveyard. We, in sha'a Allah (if Allah wills), will join you. We ask Allah for safety for all of us. May Allah have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us and those who will come later on."﴿ It was also narrated by Al-Tirmidhy (may Allah be merciful with him) on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) once passed by the graveyard of Madinah, so he turned his face towards them and said, "Peace be upon you, O, inhabitants of the graves. May Allah forgive you

and us. You are the ones who preceded us and we are going to follow you.") There are many Hadiths that stress the same meaning. It was narrated in the Two Sahih Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Abu Sa`id Al-Khudry (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Do not undertake journeys but for three Masjids: Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah), this Masjid of mine (the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah) and Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa (the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem).) May Allah grant us success! May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

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It is not permissible to seek Tabarruk from the dead

Q: During the day we received the news of the death of someone in our village. The old women went to his house and stood around his shrouded body. When we asked them why they did so, they replied that they do so to seek blessings from this man. What is the ruling on this act? Is it an act of the Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet)?

A: This act is impermissible, but it is Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect). It is impermissible to seek blessings from the dead or their graves. People should not invoke or ask anyone other than Allah (Exalted be He) to meet their needs, heal a patient or so on. Allah (Exalted be He) alone is entitled to be worshipped and asked for blessings, as He (Praised be He) is Who is described as "Blessed". In Surah Al-Furqan, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion (of right and wrong, i.e. this Qur'ân) to His slave (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) that he may be a warner to the 'Alamîn (mankind and jinn).﴿ He (Glorified be He) says: ﴾Blessed be He in Whose Hand is the dominion﴿ It means that Allah (Praised be He) has the maximum degree of sublimity and blessings. The servant, on the other hand, is made blessed

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if Allah guides, rectifies and makes him beneficial for people. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says about His Servant and Messenger `Eisa, the son of Mariam, (Jesus peace be upon him): ﴾"He ['Isâ (Jesus)] said: "Verily I am a slave of Allâh, He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet;"﴿ ﴾And He has made me blessed wheresoever I be﴿ May Allah grant us success!

The legal way of visiting graves

Q: A man is asking about people who visit the domes and graves of some good people; what is your advice to them?

A: They should be informed of the legal way of visiting graves for ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to teach his Companions to say the following when visiting the graves: "Peace be upon you, the inhabitants of the abodes of the believers and Muslims, and if Allah wills we shall join you. We supplicate to Allah for well-being for ourselves and for you!﴿ In another Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Peace be upon you, dwellings of the believing people. There has come to you that which you were promised.. You are receiving it after some delay, and if Allah wills we will follow you soon. O Allah, forgive the people of Baqi`

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A-Gharqad. ﴿ In another Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾May Allah have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us and those who come later on. May Allah forgive you and us. You are predecessors and and we will follow in your footsteps.﴿ These Hadiths, and others, that have the

same meaning illustrate the legal way of visiting graves and show that the aim of the visit is to supplicate for the dead and remind the visitor of death and the Hereafter. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Visit the graves for they remind you of the hereafter.)

As for building domes over graves and using them as places of worship, this is not permissible for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Allah cursed the Jews and the Christians for they used the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.) Also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him), (Spare no portrait but wiped out and leave not a high grave but you level it.) It is authentically reported that he (peace be upon him) said in the Hadith of Jabir

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(may Allah be pleased with him), (He (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade plastering graves, and sitting on them. and building over them) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih)

Accordingly, it is not permissible to build over graves, use them as places of worship, construct domes over them, plaster them or sit on them or to cover them with curtains. A grave should be one span above the earth in order to know that it is a grave so that it will not be harmed or treaded on. It is necessary that everyone who has knowledge to inform his fellow Muslims and teach them. This is a duty laid on the shoulders of scholars. It is obligatory on them to teach people what Allah (Exalted be He) prescribed for them and Muslims are required to gain knowledge. They should inform those who visit graves of the legal way of visiting a grave and tell them that building over graves, asking the dead, seeking blessings from the dust of graves, kissing graves or offering prayers by them is among the Bida`ahs (innovated matters in religion). It is not permissible to offer prayer by graves or take them as a place for supplications for all of this is regarded as Bida`ah. They should be told that seeking blessings or intercession on the Day of Resurrection or asking them to heal a sick person are among the kinds of Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship that takes the Muslim out of Islam) and that supplicating the dead for intercession, victory, healing and the like, is not permissible. When a person dies his acts come to an end except for three things; recurrent charity, useful knowledge or a pious son who supplicates for him.

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Asking for healing, victory over enemies and intercession with Allah (Exalted be He) are classified as major Shirk for these questions should not be referred to the dead, but to Allah Alone. There is no harm to supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) saying: "O Allah give me so and so, O Allah make Your Prophets, Your Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the angels and the believers," for this is request from Allah (Exalted and Glorified be He).

In fact, Muslims should advise and teach one another and scholars are required to guide people to Allah's Shar` (Law) and inform them of the legal way of visiting graves in accordance with the Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which were elaborated previously. People should be informed of the impermissibility of building on graves, constructing domes on them or using them as places of worship and they should be aware that it is not permissible to plaster them, sit on them or use them as places of supplications, offering prayer or reciting by them for all these matters are classified as Bida`ahs and lead to major Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship that takes the Muslim out of Islam). May Allah grant us success!

The so-called Hadith: "Anyone who visits the members of my household after my death will receive the reward of performing Hajj seventy times"

Q: What is the ruling on visiting graves, such as the graves of Imam `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him), Al-Husayn, Al-`Abbas and others? Is visiting their graves equal in reward to performing Hajj seventy times to Bayt Allah Al-Haram? Did the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: "Anyone who visits the memers of my household after my death will receive the reward of performing Hajj seventy times"? Please guide us. May Allah reward you well!

A: Visiting graves is a Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) and it teaches lessons and reminds people of death. When visiting the graves of Muslims, a person should invoke Allah (Exalted be He) for them, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to visit the graves and invoke Allah for its inhabitants, and so did the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet). The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: (Visit the graves, for they remind you of the Hereafter.) (Moreover, he (peace be upon him) taught his Sahabah to say the following upon visiting the graves: Peace be upon you, inhabitants of the abodes among the believers and the Muslims. If Allah wills, we will follow you. We ask Allah for well-being for ourselves and for you.)

In another narration, `Aisha added: (May Allah have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us and those who come later on.) In another version narrated by Ibn `Abbas, he added: (May Allah forgive us and you! You have preceded us, and we are to follow.) All these formulas of supplications and others are commendable. In addition, visiting graves reminds the person of death and teaches a Muslim to prepare for it, as it will surely come to him as it came to the inhabitants of the graves. Thus, a Muslim learns to prepare himself for this day; obey Allah (Exalted be He) and His Messenger (peace be upon him), abstain from everything that Allah (Exalted be He) and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have prohibited and make Tawbah (repentance to Allah) for being negligent. In this way, a Muslim truly benefits from visiting the graves. As for your question about visiting the graves of` `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him), Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn and others and its being equal in reward to performing Hajj seventy times, this is Batil (null and void). It is a fabricated Hadith and has no origin. In fact, visiting the Prophet's grave (peace be upon him) is not equal in reward to performing Hajj, although he is the best of all mankind. Visiting graves has its merits but it is not equal in reward to performing Hajj. This is the case with visiting the Prophet's grave, let alone visiting other graves. This is a lie and so is the fabricated Hadith you mentioned: "Anyone who visits the members of my household after my death will receive the reward of performing Hajj seventy times." All these narrations are null and have no origin and they were fabricated by liars. Consequently, it is the duty of a Muslim to be aware of these fabricated accounts attributed to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).

However, it is permissible to visit the graves, whether of the Prophet's household or other Muslims, invoke Allah (Exalted be He) for their inhabitants and ask Allah (Exalted be He) to grant them Mercy before leaving.

On the other hand, a Muslim can visit the graves of non-Muslims to remember death and to learn a lesson, but without supplicating to Allah (Exalted be He) for them. For example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited the grave of his mother and Allah (Exalted be He) forbade him from asking forgiveness for her. Similarly, there is no harm in visiting non-Muslims' graves to learn a lesson but without greeting them or asking Allah for forgiveness for them, as they do not deserve it.

Ruling on visiting the grave of Al-Husayn (may Allah be pleased with him) and its exact location

Q: People speak a lot and differ regarding the exact location of the grave of Al-Husayn. Furthermore, do Muslims obtain any benefit from knowing the accurate place of this grave?

A: In fact, people have differed concerning the exact location of the grave of Al-Husayn. It was said that he is buried in the Levant (the region covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine). Some said that he is buried in Iraq, Allah knows best what is true. They also differed concerning his head;

it was said that it is buried in the Levant or in Iraq or in Egypt. However, the correct view is that the site in Egypt is not his grave. Rather, that is a mistake and the head of Al-Husayn is not there. A number of scholars have written essays on this topic and explained that there is no evidence that the head of Al-Husayn is in Egypt. The view that is most likely to be correct is that it is in the Levant. This

is because it was taken to Yazid ibn Mu`awiyah who was in the Levant. There is no basis for the view that it was taken to Egypt. Either it was kept in the Levant in one of its stores or it was returned to his body in Iraq. Nevertheless, people do not need to know where it is buried or where it is. Rather, what is prescribed is to pray for forgiveness and mercy for him, may Allah forgive him and be pleased with him, for he was killed unlawfully. So we should ask Allah to forgive him and bestow upon him His mercy, and hope for much good for him and his brother Al-Hasan; the leaders of the youth (May Allah be pleased with them both) of Paradise as the Prophet (peace be upon him) told. If a person's grave is known, there is nothing wrong with saying Salam (Islamic greeting of peace) to him and making Du`a' (supplication) for him, as other graves may be visited, without going to extremes in that or worshipping them. It is not permissible to ask the dead to intercede, because nothing can be asked of the dead. Rather, we should make Du`a' for them and ask Allah to be merciful with them if they are Muslims, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Visit the graves

for they remind you of the hereafter.﴿

So, whoever visits the grave of Al-Husayn, or Al-Hasan, etc. to make Du`a' for them and pray for mercy and forgiveness for them, this is Sunnah (a commendable act). On the contrary, visiting graves to supplicate to dead people or seek help or intercession from them is a reprehensible action, and indeed it is major Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship). It is not permissible to build Masjids (mosques) or domes etc over graves, because the Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ﴾May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians, for they have taken the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Besides, it is authentically narrated from Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴾... forbade plastering of graves, sitting on them, and building over them.﴿ So it is not permissible to plaster over graves, perfume them, place screens around them or build over them; all of that is forbidden and these are means that lead to Shirk. And we should not pray at graves because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Beware of those who preceded you and used to take the graves of their prophets and righteous men as places of worship, but you should not take graves as Masjids; I forbid you to do that.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih Book of Hadith on the authority of Jundub ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajly [may Allah be pleased with him]). This Hadith indicates that it is not permissible to pray at graves or to take them as Masjids;

because that is a means that leads to Shirk and worshipping someone other than Allah by calling upon them (the occupants of the graves), seeking their help, making vows to them, and touching their graves to seek their blessings. Hence the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned against that. Rather graves should be visited in the manner prescribed in Shari`ah (Islamic law) only, to give Salam to them and make Du`a' for them and to ask Allah to be merciful with them, but without travelling specifically for that purpose. Allah is the One Who grants success and guides to the straight path.

Du`a' by the graves is impermissible

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From Abdul Aziz ibn Abdullah ibn Baz to his dear brother A.M.A, may Allah guide you! Amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!):

We have received your letter dated 3/3/1974, may Allah guide you, and we already knew the information included therein. May Allah bless your marriage! You asked us in your letter to supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) for you at the grave of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Please be advised that supplicating to Allah at graves is impermissible, whether it is the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or anyone else. Graves is not a place for answering Du`a' (supplication) to Allah (Exalted be He); it is only permissible to visit them, greet the dead, supplicate to Allah for them, and remember death and the Hereafter. We would like to remind you of this so that you are well-informed.

You can refer to the Hadiths of visiting the graves at the end of the chapter on funerals in the book entitled "Bulugh Al-Maram" in order to be sure about this. May Allah guide you and us to follow the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) and to act according to what pleases Allah (Glorified be He) and draws us closer to His religion! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

President of the Islamic University in Madinah

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It is impermissible to seek help from the dead

Q: Some people say that seeking the help from the dead is permissible. They support their view with the Hadith: "If you are confused about some matters, seek the help of the inhabitants of the graves." Is this Hadith Sahih (authentic)?

A: This is a fabricated Hadiths that is falsely attributed to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Many scholars including Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful with him) warned against this Hadith and stated in his book "Majmu` Al-Fatawa", (vol. 1, p. 356) after mentioning this Hadith: "The scholars of Hadith unanimously agree that this Hadith is falsely attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). No one reported it from the Prophet and it is not found in any of the reliable books of Hadith."

This falsely attributed Hadith contradicts the Qur'an and the Sunnah, for they both command us to devote acts of worship to Allah alone and prohibit Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship). Undoubtedly, invoking, seeking the help of,

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and resorting to the dead during times of calamites and catastrophes, or prosperity are acts of major Shirk.

The early Mushriks (one who associates others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) used to worship Allah alone when suffering from immense distress, but in times of prosperity, they would associate partners with Him. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states: ﴾And when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allâh, making their Faith pure for Him only: but when He brings them safely to land, behold, they give a share of their worship to others.﴿

There are many Ayahs (Qur'anic Verses) to the same effect. Mushriks these days commit shirk in times of prosperity and adversity. They even say, we seek refuge with Allah, and commit shirk more in times of adversity. This shows that their Kufr is worse and greater than that of the early polytheists. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states: ﴾And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allâh, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him)﴿ And: ﴾So, call you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم and the believers) upon (or invoke) Allâh making (your) worship pure for Him (Alone) (by worshipping none but Him and by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allâh's sake only and not to show off and not to set up rivals with Him in worship), however much the disbelievers (in the Oneness of Allâh) may hate (it).﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾So worship Allâh (Alone) by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allâh's sake only.﴿ ﴾Surely the religion (i.e. the worship and the obedience) is for Allâh only.﴿ And: ﴾Such is Allâh, your Lord; His is the kingdom. And those, whom you invoke or call upon instead of Him, own not even a Qitmîr (the thin membrane over the date-stone).﴿ ﴾If you invoke (or call upon) them, they hear not your call; and if (in case) they were to hear, they could not grant it (your request) to you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will disown your worshipping them. And none can inform you (O

Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) like Him Who is the All-Knower (of everything).》

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These two Ayahs include all those that are being worshipped besides Allah (Exalted be He) such as the Prophets and the righteous people. In the following Ayah, Allah (Glorified be He) clarifies that supplicating others beside Him is Shirk and Kufr (disbelief). He (Exalted be He) states: 《And whoever invokes (or worships), besides Allâh, any other ilâh (god), of whom he has no proof; then his reckoning is only with his Lord. Surely! Al-Kâfirûn (the disbelievers in Allâh and in the Oneness of Allâh, polytheists, pagans, idolaters) will not be successful.》

There are many Ayahs indicating the obligation of dedicating acts of worship and directing our Du`a' (supplication) to Allah alone and the prohibition of worshipping the dead, idols, trees, stones, and the like. These Ayahs are known to those who contemplate and seek the guidance of the Qur'an.

Allah is the One Whose help is sought. There is neither might nor power except with Allah.

Ruling on slaughtering animals by graves and calling the deceased persons therein

Q: What is the ruling on slaughtering animals at the shrines of Awliya' (pious people) in order to draw closer to them? What is the ruling on visiting Awliya' and beseeching Allah (Exalted be He) through their names so as to cure them or save them from distress?

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A: It is known through evidence from Qur'an and Sunnah that drawing near to other than Allah (Exalted be He), whether Awliya', Jinn (creatures created from fire), idols or others, by slaughtering animals for their sake is considered to be Shirk and one of the acts of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance) committed by the Mushriks (those who associates others with Allah in His Divinity or worship). Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states: ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "Verily, my Salât (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allâh, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists).﴿ ﴾"He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims."﴿ Sacrifice refers to slaughtering animals. Allah (Glorified be He) makes it clear that slaughtering animals for other than Him is a Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship), exactly like offering Salah (Prayer) to other than Allah. Allah (Exalted be He) also states: ﴾Verily, We have granted you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) Al-Kauthar (a river in Paradise).﴿ ﴾Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only).﴿ In this Surah (Qur'anic chapter), Allah (Glorified be He) asked His Prophet to offer Salah and to sacrifice animals

for His sake, unlike the Mushriks who offer Salah and sacrifice animals for other than Allah. He (Exalted be He) also states: ﴾And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him.﴿ And: ﴾And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allâh, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him)﴿ There are many Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) that stress this meaning.

Sacrificing animals is a form of `Ibadah (worship), so it must be dedicated to Allah Alone. It was mentioned in Sahih of Muslim on the authority of Amir Al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Believers) `Aly Ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Allah has cursed the one who slaughters (a sacrifice) to other than Allah...﴿

However, if a person supplicates to Allah (May He be Exalted) in the name of, or by the virtue of one of the Awliya', or in the name or the virtue of the Prophet (peace be upon him), this is not considered Shirk, but rather, a Bid`ah and one of the means leading to Shirk according to the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars). Du`a' (supplication) is a form of `Ibadah (worship), so it is a Tawqifiy matter (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion). Nothing was ever reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that proves the permissibility of Tawassul (supplicating to Allah in the name of /by virtue of the status of one of the people). Thus, it is impermissible for Muslims to innovate a form of Tawassul that was not prescribed by Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), according to Allah's statement: ﴾Or have they partners (with Allâh — false gods) who have instituted for them a religion which Allâh has not ordained?﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾He who innovates things in our affairs for which there is no valid (reason) (commits sin) and these are to be rejected.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) There is another narration in Sahih Muslim that is also mentioned by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih as absolutely accurate. It states: ﴾He who did any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected.﴿ His saying "that is to be rejected" means that it will not be accepted. Muslims must abide by what is prescribed by Allah (Exalted be He) and beware of the Bida`h innovated by people.

The lawful Tawassul is supplicating to Allah (Exalted be He) by virtue of Allah's Names and Attributes,

or by virtue of one's Tawhid (monotheism), righteous deeds, Iman (Faith) in Allah and His Messenger, loving Allah and His Messenger, and such righteous deeds. There are many proofs to support this. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allâh, so call on Him by them﴿ ﴾The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) heard a man saying: 'O Allah, I ask You by virtue of bearing witness that there is no god but You, the One, He to Whom men repair, Who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and to Whom no one is equal.' He (peace be upon him) said: 'You have supplicated to Allah using His Greatest Name, when asked with this Name He gives, and when supplicated by this Name He answers.'﴿ This Hadith is verified by the Four Compilers of Hadith and Ibn Hibban regarded it as Sahih.

Another proof is ﴾the story of the people of the cave who besought Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) through their righteous deeds: The first one besought Allah (may He be Glorified) with his dutifulness to parents; the second one supplicated to Allah with his refusal to commit Zina (premarital sexual intercourse) while he was able to commit it; and the third one supplicated to Allah that he developed the wage of the worker and then delivered it to him. Thus, Allah relieved them and accepted their supplication and removed the rock that blocked the door of the cave before them.﴿ This Hadith is agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim. May Allah grant us success!

Benefit regarding visiting, building and plastering graves

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There is no doubt that the issue of visiting, building and plastering graves is very important and people always need to know what Allah (Exalted be He) has legislated for them and what He commands them to avoid in order to be well-informed. A long time ago, people were afflicted with the worship of graves since the time of Nuh (Noah) (peace be upon him) when the Fitnah (sedition) of worshiping the dead took place in the time of the first Prophet whom Allah sent for humanity after Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) had taken place and people still do this until now.

Before the time of Nuh (peace be upon him) people had been Muslims for ten centuries which was between the time of Nuh and the time of Adam, as it was said by Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them). People indulged into Shirk because of the over estimation of five pious men who died in sequent times and were called: Wadd, Suwa`, Yaguth, Ya`uq and Nasr.

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People were greatly troubled when they heard the news of their death, then Satan came to them and suggested having statues for them in order to be placed in people's gatherings. He said to them: "This is a memorial to remember their acts of worship and good conditions in order not to forget them and you should exert yourself in worship as they exerted themselves." He deceived them under the guise of advising and reminding them with obedience to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). He had other goals, whether in them or in those who will come after them. He believed that with the passage of time they would change their beliefs by worshipping these paintings or even their offspring who would come after them. The matter happened as he planned and thought. They worshipped them beside Allah or their offspring worshipped them beside Allah as it was mentioned by scholars. Allah (Exalted be He) says about them: ﴿"And they have said: 'You shall not leave your gods: nor shall you leave Wadd, nor Suwâ', nor Yaghûth, nor Ya'ûq nor Nasr' (these are the names of their idols).﴾ ﴿And indeed they have led many astray.﴾ Allah (He may be Glorified) explained that these idols misled a lot of people because of the Satanic insinuations regarding the images of the five pious people whom people worshipped besides Allah. These idols were asked for help, their graves were worshipped and buildings were built on them, and so on, until Allah (Exalted be He) sent His Prophet, the seal of the prophets, to explain to the people what was done before them and what Jews and Christians did with their prophets.

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He (peace be upon him) said: ﴿May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians, for they have taken the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.﴾ He told them about what Christians used to do with their dead as in the Hadith which was narrated by Um Habibah and Um Salamah from the Prophet

(peace be upon him) about the story of the church which they saw in Abyssinia (Ethiopia), thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When a pious person among those people died, they built a place of worship on his grave, and then decorated it with such pictures. They would be the worst of creatures on the Day of Judgment in the sight of Allah.﴿ He explained that Christians used to establish buildings and place pictures on the graves of their righteous persons. Then he informed that they are the worst of creatures in the sight of Allah because of this.

Visiting the graves was basically legislated, not for Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah) or seeking blessings, but to remind people about the Hereafter, their meeting with Allah, asceticism in worldly pleasures and to know that death is inevitable and that surely a person will suffer death like those who were before him.

Visiting the graves is a kind of benevolence to the dead by supplicating Allah to bestow mercy on them in case they are Muslims.

﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) sought permission from Allah to visit the grave of his mother, and he was granted permission.﴿ This is because

visiting graves reminds one of death the Hereafter. When he asked the permission of Allah to seek forgiveness for her, he was not given that because she died on Jahiliyyah (time of Pre Islamic Ignorance) which is the religion of her people. This indicates that if the graves are of non-Muslim or people who are in the period of Jahiliyyah, it is not permissible to supplicate to Allah for them or ask pardon for them. It is not permissible also to greet them peace. They are just visited for remembrance and exhortation. A person should not greet them or supplicate to Allah for their sake because they died while embracing a religion other than Islam. Allah (He may be Glorified) says: ﴾It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allâh's Forgiveness for the Mushrikûn (polytheists, idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh), even though they be of kin, after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the Fire (because they died in a state of disbelief).﴿

The Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) is when a visitor visits the Muslim cemetery, he should say: ﴾May you be safe, O inmates of the abodes of the believers and the Muslims, and if Allah pleases, we shall follow you, we pray to Allah for well-being for ourselves and for you).﴿ It was reported in another narration: ﴾May Allah have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us and those who come later on.﴿

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited graves, he used to supplicate to Allah and seek forgiveness for them. When he visited Al-Baqi` (the graveyard of the people of Madinah), he used to say: ﴾O Allah, forgive the people of Baqi` Al-Gharqad ﴿ When he visited the graves of martyrs, he used to supplicate to Allah for them; this is the Sunnah of visiting graves.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited visiting graves at the early days of Islam as

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people were newly-converted to Islam. They used to overestimate the dead, supplicate to them and seek their help, so he (peace be upon him) prohibited them from visiting the graves in order not to let their hearts be filled with Shirk and not to do things which displease Allah (Exalted be He) because a few years ago they were worshiping and glorifying graves.

When Tawhid (monotheism) was settled in the hearts of Muslims and they knew the meaning of the Shahadah (Testimony of Faith) and Shari`ah (Islamic law), they were given permission to visit the graves because of the benefits of doing so as remembering the Hereafter, meeting with Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), asceticism in worldly pleasures and preparing for death. Let it be known that death is suffered by all people, and will surely come to you, so be kind to the dead by supplicating and seeking forgiveness for them.

The graves at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to be raised one handspan from the ground (23 centimeters) with no building, plastering or domes above. It was the same during the time of the Sahabah (the Companions of the Prophet) and the preferable centuries. Then people altered the Sunnah and built, plastered and furnitured the graves like the Jews and the Christians did except for those on whom Allah (Exalted be He) bestowed His mercy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾You will certainly follow the ways of those before you as close as a feather of an arrow is to another, until even if they entered the hole of a lizard, you would enter it too. They said: "O Messenger of Allah! (Do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?" He said: "Who else?﴿

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(Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). The meaning is that who else will be meant by the Hadith except those? People followed the example of Jews and Christians in building over graves and establishing Masjids (mosques) and domes over it. Moreover, they furnitured them until extremism took place and people started to worship them, circulated around their graves and asked them for help besides Allah. Therefore, many people committed Shirk. Many people who have no discernment call them and ask them for aid, help, curing the sick and victory over their enemies which is full of Shirk and associating others with Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He).

Allah (Exalted be He) says in Surat-Fatir: ﴾Such is Allâh, your Lord; His is the kingdom. And those, whom you invoke or call upon instead of Him, own not even a Qitmîr (the thin membrane over the date-stone).﴿ ﴾If you invoke (or call upon) them, they hear not your call; and if (in case) they were to hear, they could not grant it (your request) to you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will disown your worshipping them. And none can inform you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) like Him Who is the All-Knower (of everything).﴿ This is what exactly happens in these days where many people who are known as Shi`ite and others supplicate to Al-Husayn Ibn `Aly and the Prophet (peace be upon him) from a distant place. They supplicate also to `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him). They do all these things out of ignorance. They seek aid, help, support, and victory over their enemies from them because they, according to them, know what happens in the nation as well as what happens to them. They used to say: "Help us, aid us and give us victory and so on!" They forget Allah (Exalted be He) and call on the

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dead. When waves are high in the sea, they also seek the help of the dead and cry for help to save them from drowning. The former Mushriks (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or

worship) were less in Shirk than such people. The former Mushriks used to seek the help of Allah alone when they are in need as Allah (He may be Glorified) says: ﴾And when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allâh, making their Faith pure for Him only: but when He brings them safely to land, behold, they give a share of their worship to others.﴿

This is the case of the earlier Mushriks such as Abu Jahl and the like. As for those people -those who worship the graves and the dead- their Shirk is continuous whether in relief or in adversity.

Sometimes people light fire at graves and this act is baseless as well as all the reported happenings in this regard. There is no basis for reciting Qur'an at a grave or when burying the dead. Some people invented another new Bid`ah (innovation in religion) which is to pronounce Adhan (call to Prayer) and Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) in the grave and then they bury the dead, but this is a baseless new Bid`ah. Likewise, Talqin (encouraging someone dying to say: "La ilaha illa Allah") after putting him in the grave and burying him by saying: "O so and so," and if they do not know his mother, they say: "O so and so the son of Eve, remember what you used to do in the world; the testimony of La ilaha illa Allah (there is no deity but Allah) and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and so on.

This action is baseless

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and its reported narrations are not correct but was done by some of the people of Al-Sham (The Levant) after the end of the first century. There is no evidence in the saying or actions of anyone as long as it is against the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). It is permissible to do what the Prophet (peace be upon him) did when he used to bury the dead; he used to ask Allah (Exalted be He) to forgive him. It is a Sunnah for those who follow the funeral not to rush to leave after the burial because of the Prophet's saying (peace be upon him): ﴾Whoever accompanies the funeral procession of a Muslim out of faith and seeking the reward of Allah and accompanies it until the end of its burial, shall have a reward equal to two Qirats and each Qirat is as huge as the mountain of Uhud. ﴿ This indicates that the follower of a funeral procession should stay with it until after the burial. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to stand by the grave of the dead after his burial saying to people: ﴾Seek forgiveness for your brother, and beg steadfastness for him, for he will be questioned now.﴿ This is the Sunnah and he did not prompt him because Talqin should be done when the portents of death appear on the person's face. He should be prompted to say: La ilaha illa Allah (there is no deity but Allah), or they may mention Allah before him in order to repeat it at the end of his life because of the Prophet's saying:

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﴾He whose last words are: `La ilaha illallah' (There is no true god except Allah) will enter Jannah (Paradise).﴿ And his saying: ﴾Dictate to your dying ones (to say), 'There is no god but Allah.'﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih)

If he does not pay attention, there is no harm for his friends to say: "O so and so, say: 'La ilaha illa Allah (there is no deity but Allah),'" gently along with other good speech.

A person may not sit on the grave and it is not permissible to offer any kind of Salah (Prayer) except the Funeral Prayer in case the person did not offer it in congregation. So, there is no harm to offer Salah at the grave. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did so when he offered Salah over a dead person a month after his burial. This action indicates that there is no harm to offer Salah at the grave after the passage of one month. If more than one month has passed, it is better not to do this except if the period is not long, like if it is one or two days because acts of worship are specified by Allah or

His Messenger (peace be upon him). Likewise, it is not permissible (to write on the graves, build on them, and plaster them because the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade these actions.) This was related by Muslim in his Sahih (book of authentic Hadiths). Therefore, all people should cooperate in piety and righteousness.

We ask Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He)

to grant us success. May Allah's peace and blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad, upon his family and Companions!

Ruling on staying by the grave reciting extolments and Adhkar for three days

Q: There is a shrine for a pious person in our country. Every year, people, men and women, go to this grave and stay beside it chanting extolments and Adhkar (invocations) for three days and doing other common things of these celebrities and we do so along with them. What is the ruling on this regard?

A: This act is not permissible and it is counted as Bida`ah (matter innovated in religion). Therefore, it is not legally permitted to build over graves, whether this building is called a shrine, a tomb, a Masjid (mosque) or any other name. There were graves at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the era of his companions that were located in Al-Baqi` and other places that remained exposed without any building over them. ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade building over the graves or plastering them.﴿ He (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Allah cursed the Jews and the Christians, for they took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Also, Jabir ibn

`Abdullah Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ﴾The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade plastering graves, sitting on them, and building over them. ﴿ (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih) It turns out that building on graves, plastering, adorning and covering them are detestable and not permissible for they lead to Shirk (ascribing partners to Allah in worship). Building domes and Masjids (mosques) or hanging curtains over them are also not allowed. Moreover, visiting graves in the way the questioner mentioned which includes sitting by them, chanting extolments, eating food, wiping oneself with the grave dust seeking blessings, supplicating and offering Salah (Prayer) by them is Bida`ah and not allowable. Visiting tombs is required for remembering Allah (Exalted be He), supplication for the dead and asking Allah to forgive them and after that going away.

It is prescribed for the visitor of the grave to say: ﴾Peace be upon you, the inhabitants of the abodes of the believers and Muslims, and if Allah wills we shall join you. We pray to Allah for well-being for ourselves and for you. May Allah have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us and those who will come later on!﴿ Only this supplication and the like that the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) are prescribed. Moreover, Al-Tirmidhy narrated on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) that he said: ﴾The Prophet (peace be

upon him) passed by the graves of Madinah and said: 'Peace be upon you,

O people of the graves. May Allah forgive us and you! You have preceded us, and we are to follow.')

With regard to staying by the grave for eating, drinking, chanting extolments, offering Salah or reciting the Qur'an, all of these acts are impermissible and have no basis in the Purified Shar` (Law).

As for invoking the deceased, appealing to him and calling him for help are acts of major Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and from the acts of the idolaters during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who worshipped Al-Lat, Al-`Uzza and Manat Al-Lat, Al-`Uzza and Manat and other idols of the pre-Islamic era. Therefore, one should keep away from this and warn others against this and explain the religion so that they may be safe from Shirk. This also is a duty on scholars whom Allah (Exalted be He) has blessed with understanding of religion and knowing what Allah revealed to His messengers (peace be upon them). Allah (Exalted be He) says: (Invite (mankind, O Muhammad صلى الله عليه و سلم) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islâm) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur'ân) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better.) And: (And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): "Worship Allâh (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Tâghût (all false deities i.e. do not worship Tâghût besides Allâh).") And: (And who is better in speech than he who [says: "My Lord is Allâh (believes in His Oneness)," and then stands firm (acts upon His Order), and] invites (men) to Allâh's (Islâmic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds, and says: "I am one of the Muslims.") And: (Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه و سلم): "This is my way; I invite unto Allâh (i.e. to the Oneness of Allâh - Islâmic Monotheism) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allâh i.e. to the Oneness of Allâh - Islâmic Monotheism with sure knowledge). And Glorified and Exalted be Allâh (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not of the Mushrikûn (polytheists, pagans, idolaters and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh; those who worship others along with Allâh or set up rivals or partners to Allâh).")

There are also many Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) that stress the same meaning.

Moreover, when Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) sent Mu`adh to Yemen he said to him: (You will soon find yourself in a community of the People of the Book, so call them to testify that there is no one worthy of worship but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.) It was mentioned in another narration reported by Al-Bukhari (may Allah be Merciful with him): (Invite them to testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah. If they obey you, tell them that Allah (may He be Exalted) has enjoined upon them five Salahs during the day and night. If they obey you, tell them that Allah has made Zakah (obligatory charity) obligatory for them which is to be taken from the rich among them and distributed among the poor of them. If they obey you, beware of the best of their property and the supplication of an oppressed person, because there is no screen between his invocation and Allah (may He be Exalted).) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered Mu`adh to start by calling the people to Monotheism and keeping away from Shirk along with believing in the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and testifying that he is a Allah's Messenger.

It is known from this that the call to rectification and safety of the creed precedes other rulings for the creed is the basis on which rulings are founded. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (But if they had joined in worship others with Allâh, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them.)

And: ﴿And indeed it has been revealed to you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), as it was to those (Allâh's Messengers) before you: "If you join others in worship with Allâh, (then) surely (all) your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers."﴾ There are many Ayahs that stress this meaning.

Therefore, it is obligatory upon scholars everywhere to exert every effort in this regard and to explain the truth to people and elaborate the true `Aqidah (creed) for them which Allah (Exalted be He) revealed to His Messengers (peace be upon him) headed by their Imam, master and seal of Prophets Muhammad (peace be upon him). May Allah guide all Muslims to what pleases him for He is the best One asked for help.

Bid`ahs in visiting graves

Q: When someone dies here in Sudan, the family of the deceased, including the women and children, go to visit the grave after forty days, and they open it. They have seeds of corn with them which they scatter over the dead body, and I think they throw stones on the deceased as well. Is it permissible for women to visit graves?

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A: This is a Bid`ah (innovation in religion) for which there is no basis in Shari`ah (Islamic law). Throwing seeds, perfume and clothes into the grave are all reprehensible, groundless actions. The grave should not be opened unless there is a good reason for doing so, such as the workers forgetting their tools like shovels, or if one of them has dropped something important, so the grave may be opened to retrieve it, but opening it to scatter seeds or clothes and such things is impermissible. Women are not allowed to visit graves, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴾cursed the women who visit graves.﴿ This was related on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, Ibn `Abbas and Hassan ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with them). It is impermissible for women to visit graves, but it is prescribed for men, according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Visit the graves, for they remind you of the Hereafter.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith) The reason why women are forbidden from visiting graves, and Allah knows best, is that they are Fitnah (temptation) and they have little patience.

Ruling on women visiting graves

Q: My maternal aunt's father died, and she visited his grave once. She wants to visit his grave again, but she heard a Hadith forbidding women from visiting the graves. Is this Hadith Sahih (authentic)? If it is so,

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does she bear a sin for which a Kaffarah (expiation) is required?

A: The correct view is that it is impermissible for women to visit graves, according to the mentioned Hadith. ﴾It is authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that he cursed the women who visit graves.﴿ Thus, women should abstain from visiting graves. Any woman who has visited a grave out of ignorance of this ruling is not to blame, but she should not do it again. If she does it again, she should perform Tawbah (repentance to Allah) and seek Allah's Forgiveness, since Tawbah effaces previous sins. Based on that, visiting graves is permissible for men only. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Visit the graves, for they remind you of the Hereafter.﴿ At the beginning of Islam, visiting graves was not allowed for either men or women, because Muslims had embraced Islam recently and were used to worshipping the dead. Hence, they were forbidden from visiting graves as a way of Sadd-ul-Dhara'i` (blocking the means leading to sins) and preventing Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship). When Islam was well-established and the Muslims understood it, Allah made visiting the graves lawful for them because of the lessons they draw from remembering death, and due to the benefits of invoking Allah for the dead and asking Him to grant them Mercy. Later, Allah forbade woman from visiting the graves, according to the most authentic opinion of scholars. This is because women may expose men and themselves to Fitnah (temptation), and because they tend to show little patience. Allah, out of His Mercy and Kindness, forbade women from visiting the graves. Thus, Allah is also Merciful to men who may be exposed to Fitnah in such gatherings.

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Therefore, Allah forbade women to visit graves out of His Mercy.

As for women offering the Funeral Prayer, there is no harm in that. They are only prohibited from visiting the graves, according to the most authentic opinion of scholars, based on the Hadith mentioned in this regard. Moreover, women who have visited a grave do not have to offer a Kaffarh. It is enough for them to perform Tawbah.

What is the ruling on women who visit the graves ?

A: It is not permissible for women to visit the graves, (for the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) cursed women who visit the graves) because of their being a Fitnah (source of temptation) and for their low level of patience. Thus, it is considered Mercy and Bounty from Allah (may He be Exalted and Glorified) to prohibit them from visiting the graves, to protect them from seducing or being seduced. May Allah set right the affairs of all people!

Q: Is it permissible for women to visit graves?

A: (It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) cursed the women who visited graves,) according to the Hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbas, Abu Hurayrah, and Hassan ibn Thabit Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with them all). The scholars have deduced from this report that it is Haram (prohibited) for women to visit graves, because cursing is only mentioned in relation to deeds that are Haram. In fact, it indicates that it is a major sin, as the scholars mention that sins which entail a curse or a threat are considered as major sins.

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Therefore, the correct view is that it is Haram for women to visit graves, not just Makruh (reprehensible). The reason is - and Allah knows best - that women in general have little patience, and this may result in them wailing or the like, and this contradicts the obligatory patience in this situation. They are also a source of Fitnah (temptation), so if they visit graves and accompany funeral processions (to the cemetery), men may be tempted by them or they may be tempted by the men. The perfectly comprehensive Islamic Shari'ah (law) blocks the means leading to Fasad (corruption) and Fitnah, out of Allah's Mercy for His Servants.

It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, ("I am not leaving behind me any Fitnah more harmful to men than women.") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim as Sahih [a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish]) It is obligatory to block the means to the above-mentioned Fitnah, as we have just mentioned. The purified Shari'ah also forbids Tabarruj (dressing immodestly in violation of the Islamic dress code), women speaking softly to men, Khulwah (being alone with a member of the opposite sex) with a non-Mahram (not a spouse or an unmarriageable relative), and traveling without a Mahram. All this is to block the means leading to the Fitnah that could be caused by them. The opinion of some Fuqaha' (Muslim jurists) is that making the graves of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his two Sahabah (Companions, Abu Bakr and 'Umar [may Allah be pleased with them both]) exceptions from this is without evidence. The correct view is that the prohibition is general and includes all graves, even the graves of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his two Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them both).

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This is the established opinion based on the evidence. As for men, it is Mustahab (desirable) for them to visit graves, including that of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and his two Sahabah, as long as no travel is undertaken, acting upon the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ("Visit graves, for they remind you of the Hereafter.") (Related by Muslim in his "Sahih [Book of Authentic Hadith]")

As for traveling for the purpose of visiting graves, it is not permissible. However, it is lawful to travel especially to visit the three Masjids (Mosques), as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("No journey should be made except to three Masjids: Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah), this Masjid of mine (Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy in Madinah), and Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa (the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem).") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim as Sahih)

If a Muslim visits Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy, they can secondarily visit the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the graves of his two Sahabah, the graves of the martyrs, and the occupants of Al-Baqi'. They can also visit Masjid Quba' (in a town near Madinah where the Prophet established the first mosque), as long as they do not travel especially for this purpose. However, if someone is in Madinah, it is lawful for them to visit the Prophet's grave, the graves of his two Sahabah, and also visit Al-Baqi', the graves of the martyrs, and Masjid Quba'.

But traveling long distances just to visit them is not permissible, according to the more correct of the two opinions maintained by the scholars, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("No journey should be made except to three Masjids: Al-Masjid Al-Haram, this Masjid of mine, and Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa.") When traveling to visit Al-Masjid

Al-Nabawy, visiting the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the other graves must be subordinate to this. So when someone arrives at the Masjid, they should engage themselves in offering Salah (Prayer), as much as they can, and then visit the graves of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and his Sahabah. They should ask Allah to send His Peace and Blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him), greet him with Salam (Islamic greeting of peace) and supplicate for him. They should then greet Al-Siddiq (Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him) and supplicate for him; and then greet Al-Faruq ('Umar) and supplicate for him. This is the Sunnah (what was reported from the Prophet). The same should be done at other graves. So if someone visits Damascus, Cairo, Riyadh, or any other city, it is desirable for them to visit the graves that are there to take lessons, remember death, and do kindness to the deceased by supplicating to Allah for them and asking Him to show mercy to them, if they are Muslims. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Visit graves, for they remind you of the Hereafter.") He (peace be upon him) used to teach his Sahabah, when they visited graves to say: ("As-salamu 'alaykum (May Allah's Peace be upon you) dwellers of the abode from the believers and Muslims. We will, In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills), surely follow you. We beg of Allah safety for us and you." In another version of the Hadith, "May Allah have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us, and those who will come after.") It is the Sunnah to do so, but without traveling especially for this purpose. However, it is not permissible to visit them to supplicate to them beside Allah, as this is Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and worshipping other than Him. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has declared this to be Haram (prohibited) for His Servants when He says: (And the mosques are for Allâh (Alone): so invoke not anyone along with Allâh.) And when He (may He be Praised) says: (Such is Allâh, your Lord; His is the kingdom. And those, whom you invoke or call upon instead of Him, own not even a Qitmîr (the thin membrane over the date-stone).) (If you invoke (or call upon) them, they hear not your call; and if (in case) they were to hear, they could not grant it (your request) to you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will disown your worshipping them. And none can inform you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) like Him Who is the All-Knower (of everything).)

Allah (may He be Praised) makes it clear that calling upon dead believers and others is Shirk and worshipping other than Him.

Allah (may He be Praised) also says: (And whoever invokes (or worships), besides Allâh, any other ilâh (god), of whom he has no proof; then his reckoning is only with his Lord. Surely! Al-Kâfirûn (the disbelievers in Allâh and in the Oneness of Allâh, polytheists, pagans, idolaters) will not be successful.) He thereby calls supplicating to other than Allah Kufr (disbelief). It is obligatory upon

Muslims to beware of this and it is obligatory on the scholars to clarify these matters for people, so they will be aware of Shirk. Many ordinary people, when passing by graves of those whom they glorify, implore their help and say, "O so-and-so! Madad! Madad! (Give me strength)," "I seek your help", "Help me", "Support me" or "Cure my illness." All of this is major Shirk - and may Allah protect us from it! These things can only be asked from Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), not from the dead nor from any other creature.

As for those who are alive, they can be asked what they can do, if they are present and can hear you, by speaking directly to them, or by writing, by phone, or any similar sensible means. They can be asked by these means to do whatever they are able to do, such as to help in your home, work on your farm, etc., because they are acquaintances of yours or you help each other out. There is nothing wrong in this,

as Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says in the story of Musa (Moses): ﴾The man of his (own) party asked him for help against his foe﴿ But asking the dead, those who are absent, or inanimate objects, such as idols, to cure an illness, to grant victory against an enemy, etc., this is major Shirk. The same ruling applies to asking a living person who is present to do what none but Allah (may he be Praised and Glorified) can do. This is also considered as Shirk, because making Du'a' (supplications) to those who are absent without using physical means, shows that you believe that they know the Ghayb (Unseen) or that they hear your Du'a', even if they are far from you. This is a false belief that entails declaring anyone believing it to be Kafir (disbeliever). Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾Say: "None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghaib (Unseen) except Allâh"﴿ The same ruling applies if you believe that someone has a certain secret power over the universe which they can use to give whoever they want or deprive whoever they want, as some ignorant people believe of those they call the Awliya' (pious people). This is Shirk Al-Rububiyyah (associating others in the Lordship with Allah), which is graver than the Shirk of worshipping idols.

thus, the Shar'y (Islamically lawful) visit to the deceased is to ask Allah to have mercy on them, to remember the Hereafter and prepare oneself for it, and to remember that you will die as those who have already died and to prepare yourself for the Hereafter, and to supplicate to Allah for your deceased fellow Muslims asking Him to have mercy on them. This is the wisdom behind permitting visits to graves. May Allah grant us success!

The answer to the question about the Hadith wherein

the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught `Aisha the Du`a' (supplication) to be said when visiting graves

Q: How should we interpret the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught `Aisha the Du`a' (supplication) to be said on visiting graves?

A: Visiting graves used to be forbidden for everyone. Then it was permitted for people to visit them. Then it was forbidden for women exclusively. Accordingly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) must have taught `Aisha the etiquette of such a visit at the time of its permissibility for all. May Allah grant us success!

The answer to the question about the Hadith wherein the Prophet said: ﴾Fear Allah and be patient﴿

Q: Does the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴾Fear Allah and be patient﴿ to the woman he saw weeping by the grave prove the permissibility of women visiting graves?

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A: This must have happened at the time durin which the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave general permission for both men and women to visit graves because the Hadiths prohibiting women from visiting graves are entirely clear and abrogate the previous Hadiths.

Women should not greet the deceased

even when passing by the fence of the graves or through them

Q: When passing by the fence of the graves, should women greet the deceased?

A: I am in the view that women should not do this, because it is a form of visiting a grave and it may be considered a visit. Women should not do this and they can supplicate for them (the deceased) without visiting them.

Q: What happens if a care stops over a bridge that was established over graves, and there is a woman inside the car, can this be judged as a kind of visiting the graves? Is it permissible for women to greet the deceased?

A: This has nothing to do with visiting the graveyards. Moreover, if the car passes by graves and a woman has a look at such graves, this has nothing to do with visiting at all. However, women should not greet the deceased even when passing by graves.

The ruling on women visiting the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Q: Is it permissible for women to visit the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him)?

A: It is not permissible for them to do so owing to the Hadiths reported concerning forbidding women from visiting graves and cursing them if they do so. It is known that there is a difference among scholars concerning women visiting the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him).Yet, avoiding this is better and closer to the Sunnah because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not exclude his grave or the grave of anyone else from the ruling but he gave a general prohibition and cursed the women who do so. General evidence is to be observed if there is no confining text and there is no evidence that excludes the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from this. May Allah grant us success!

It is better for whoever passes by a graveyard wall to greet the deceased

Q: If a Muslim passes by the fence of a graveyard or sees graves, should he greet the deceased?

A: It is better to salute the dead even if one is passing by them, but visiting them intentionally is better.

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Q: I live in a district that has a graveyard where I go daily through a road that runs alongside it; even I go along the road many times during the day. What should I do in such a case? Should I always greet the deceased or what should I do? Please guide me. May Allah bless you!

A: Paying a Shar`i visit to the graves is an act of the Sunnah because it involves reminding the person about the Hereafter and death. It also involves supplicating to Allah (Exalted be He) to forgive and have mercy on the deceased and to save them from Hellfire, if they are Muslims. This is based on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Visit the graves for they remind you of the hereafter.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to teach his Companions whenever they would visit the graves to say: ﴾Peace be upon you all, inhabitants of the graves from among the Muslims and the believers. Verily we will, Allah willing, (surely) follow you. We ask Allah to give us and you the good.﴿ There are many Hadiths concerning visiting graves. It is precribed that whenever you pass by graves that you greet their inhabitants and supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) to have mercy on them and to give them all that is good. This is not obligatory, but it is Mustahab (desirable) and entails a great reward. If you pass without greeting them, there is no blame upon you. May Allah grant us success!

It is sufficient to greet the dead once when first entering the graveyard

Q: Is it sufficient to greet the dead just one time when first entering the graveyard?

A: That is sufficient, and it achieves the purpose of visiting the graves. If the graves are far away and a person visits them from all directions, that is permissible.

Q: When visiting the graves, is it prescribed for the visitor to go to the particular grave that he wants to visit?

A: It is sufficient for him (to say greetings) at the first graves he comes to, but if he wants to go to the grave of the person that he wants to visit and say greetings to him, then that is permissible.

What is mentioned regarding whether the deceased knows his or her visitors

Q: Do the dead recognize those who visit them?

A: It is related in some Hadiths: (If the dead knew him in the worldly life,

Allah will return his soul to return the salutation) Yet its Isnad (chain of transmission) is subject to question although it is judged as Sahih (authentic) by Ibn `Abdul-Bar (may Allah be merciful with him).

The deceased's knowledge of the acts of living beings

Q: Are the dead aware of the acts of their living relatives?

A: I know of no evidence from the Shari`ah that supports this claim.

Ruling on specifying Friday for visiting graves

Q: What is the ruling on specifying Friday for visiting graves?

A: This is baseless. It is permissible to visit the graves at any time during the day or night in a way that suits the visitor. With regard to specifying a particular day or night, this is a baseless Bid`ah (innovation in religion). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever innovates anything in this matter of ours (Islam) that is not a part of it will have it rejected.") (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) He (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever does anything that is not a part of this matter of ours (Islam) will have it rejected.") (Related by Muslim on the authority of `Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her)

Ruling on visiting the graves on the Two `Eids

Q: Does specifying the Two `Eids (`Eid-ul-Adha and `Eid-ul-Fitr festivals) for visiting the graves have any basis in Islam?

A: As far as I know there is no basis for this. However, the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) is to visit the graves whenever possible.

Ruling on visiting the graves of Kafirs

Q: Is it permissible to visit the graves of Kafirs (disbelievers/non-Muslims)?

A: There is nothing wrong with that if it is done to learn a lesson. The Prophet (peace be upon him) visited the grave of his mother and asked the permission of his Lord to seek forgiveness for her, but he was not given permission, but he was permitted to visit her.

Q: What is the degree of authenticity of the Hadith: "If you pass by the grave of a Kafir, give him a portent of Hell-fire"?

A: I do not know of any authentic narrations for this.

Ruling on raising the hands when making Du`a' to the dead at a grave

Q: Should one raise his hands when making Du`a' (supplication) for the dead?

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A: It is permissible for a person to raise his hands. It was authentically reported on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) (that the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited the graves, raised his hands, and supplicated for their inhabitants.) (Related by Muslim)

Q: Is it permissible to raise hands when making Du`a' for the dead?

A: It was reported in some Hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) raised his hands when he visited the graves and supplicated for their inhabitants. It was authentically reported on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) (visited the graves, supplicated for them (their inhabitants) and raised his hands.) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith)

Ruling on facing the grave when supplicating for the dead

Q: Is it forbidden to face the grave when making Du`a' (supplication) for the dead?

A: That is not forbidden; rather, a person may make Du`a' for the dead facing the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah) or facing the grave, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) stood at graves after the burial, and said: ﴾Seek forgiveness for your brother, and beg steadfastness for him, for he will be questioned now.﴿ He did not say to face the Qiblah, so both are permissible, whether one faces the Qiblah or the grave. The Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) (may Allah be pleased with them) supplicated for the dead when they were gathered around the grave.

It is permissible to stand or sit down at the grave to supplicate to Allah for the deceased?

Q: Is it permissible for us to stand or sit down at the grave to supplicate to Allah for the deceased?

A: The Shar`y (Islamically lawful) visit to graves is to go there to take lessons and remember death, not to attain blessings from the righteous people who are buried there. When a person goes to visit graves, he should greet those who are buried there saying: (Peace be upon you, the inhabitants of the graves, among the believers and Muslims, and Allah willing we shall join you. We pray to Allah for well-being for ourselves and for you.) It is permissible to supplicate to Allah for the dead with any other Du`a' Ma'thur (supplication based on transmitted reports).

However, a person should not seek help from the dead or supplicate to them to reveal harm or to bring about a benefit. Du`a' is an act of worship and it must be for Allah Alone. There is no harm in standing or sitting down beside the in order to supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) for the dead, but not for Tabarruk (seeking blessings) or taking rest, for the graves are not a place for resting.

It is permissible to stand at the grave after burying the deceased to ask Allah to keep him firm (on the truth) and to seek forgiveness for him. It was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that when he buried the deceased, he used to stand at the grave

and say: (Seek forgiveness for your brother and ask Allah to make him stand firm for he is being questioned now.)

Ruling on congregational Du`a' when visiting graves

Q: What is the ruling on congregational Du`a' (supplication) when visiting graves?

A: There is nothing wrong with this if someone of the visitors supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) and the people hearing them say Amen, in an unintentional way. If they hear someone supplicating and the others say Amen, this is not called congregational Du`a', for it is not intended beforehand.

Ruling on reciting Surah Al-Fatihah for the dead at their graves

Q: A questioner from Al-Layth, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, inquires: Is it permissible to recite Surah Al-Fatihah or any other part of the Qur'an at the grave of a dead person when visiting it? Does this incur any benefit for the dead? Give us fatwa. May Allah reward you well.

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A: The Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have usually visited graves and made Du`a' (supplication) for the dead which he taught to his Companions and which they reported from him. One of these examples states: (May you be safe, O inmates of the abodes of the believers and the Muslims, and if Allah pleases, we shall follow you, we pray to Allah for well-being for ourselves and for you.) However, he (peace be upon him) is not authentically reported to have recited any Surah or Ayah of the Qur'an for the dead although he visited them frequently. Had it been permissible, he would have done so and would have commended his Companions to do so, wishing for reward, having mercy on the Ummah (nation) and performing the duty of conveying the message. Actually, he was described by his Lord as: (Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) from amongst yourselves (i.e. whom you know well). It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) is anxious over you (to be rightly guided, to repent to Allâh, and beg Him to pardon and forgive your sins in order that you may enter Paradise and be saved from the punishment of the Hell-fire); for the believers (he صلى الله عليه وسلم is) full of pity, kind, and merciful.) Since he has not done so in spite of the existence of reasons for doing so, it is indicated that doing so is impermissible. Knowing this, his Companions, following his example, only visited graves for taking lessons and supplicating Allah (Exalted be He) for the dead. They are not reported to have recited the Qur'an for the benefit of the dead. Therefore, reciting the Qur'an for the dead is a Bid`ah (innovation in religion). In this regard, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported as saying: (He who innovates things in our affairs for which there is no valid (reason) (commits sin) and these are to be rejected.) May Allah grant us success.

Ruling on reciting Al-Fatihah over the graves of Awliya'

Q: What is the ruling on visiting the graves, especially of Awliya' (pious people) as called in some neighboring Arab countries and reciting Al-Fatihah? Nevertheless, some admit that they do not intend Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship), but claim that when they do not visit them, they come to them in a dream to blame them. What is the ruling on this? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is a Sunnah (commendable act) for Muslim men to visit graves, as legislated by Allah (Glorified be He). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Visit the graves for they remind you of the hereafter.﴿ (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih 'authentic' Book of Hadith). It is related also by Muslim in his Sahih Book on the authority of Buraydah ibn Al-Husayb (may Allah be pleased with him) that: ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to teach his Companions to recite the following when visiting the graves: Peace be upon you, the inhabitants of the abodes of the believers and Muslims, and In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills) we shall join you. We pray to Allah for well-being for ourselves and for you.﴿ It is authentically reported on the authority

of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾... used to say when visiting the graves: Peace be upon you, inhabitants of the abodes of the believers and the Muslims. In sha'a-Allah, we will join you. May Allah be merciful with those who have gone ahead of us, and those who come later on. O Allah, forgive the people of Baqi` Al-Gharqad.﴿ He (peace be upon him) did not recite Surah (Qur'anic chapter) Al-Fatihah or any other Surah when visiting the graves. Reciting it at the time of the visit is Bid`ah (innovation in religion) for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever innovates things in our Din 'religion' for which there is no valid (reason) (commits sin) and these are to be rejected.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim). In a narration by Muslim (may Allah be merciful with him), the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever does any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected.﴿

Besides, in the Sahih Book of Muslim on the authority of Jabir ibn `Abdullah Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with them both) the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾... used to say in his Khutbah (sermon) on Friday: 'The best of speech is embodied in the Book of Allah; the best of guidance is that given by Muhammad (peace be upon him); the most evil affairs are innovations; and every Bid`ah leads to misguidance.'﴿ The same Hadith is related by Al-Nasa'y with this addition: ﴾... and every misguidance leads to Hellfire.﴿ Muslims have to abide by the purified Shar` (Law) and avoid committing Bid`ahs when visiting the graves and regarding all other matters.

Visitation is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) for the graves of all Muslims - Awliya' or not. In fact, every male or female believer is of the Awliya' of Allah. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾No doubt! Verily, the Auliyâ' of Allâh [i.e. those who believe in the Oneness of Allâh and fear Allâh much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which he has forbidden), and love Allâh much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)], no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve.﴿ ﴾Those who believed (in the Oneness of Allâh - Islâmic Monotheism), and used to fear Allâh much (by abstaining from evil deeds and sins and by doing righteous deeds).﴿ and: ﴾and they are not its guardians? None can be its guardians except Al-Muttaqûn (the pious - See V.2:2), but most of them know not.﴿ It is not permissible for the visitor to invoke the dead, seek their help, vow for them or slaughter sacrifices at their graves or any other place, in a way to be closer to them to let them intercede on his behalf or heal his sick people or give him victory over his enemies, and so on as all these matters come under `Ibadah (worship). All `Ibadah should be devoted to Allah Alone. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allâh, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him)﴿ and: ﴾And I (Allâh) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).﴿ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾And the mosques are for Allâh (Alone): so invoke not anyone along with Allâh.﴿ and: ﴾And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him.﴿ Allah

(Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾So, call you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم and the believers) upon (or invoke) Allâh making (your) worship pure for Him (Alone) (by worshipping none but Him and by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allâh's sake only and not to show off and not to set up rivals with Him in worship), however much the disbelievers (in the Oneness of Allâh) may hate (it).﴿ and: ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "Verily, my Salât (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allâh, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists).﴿ ﴾"He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims."﴿ There are many other Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) to the same effect. Moreover, it is authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The right of Allah over His Slaves is that they should worship Him and not associate anything with Him.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Mu`adh may Allah be pleased with him). This includes all acts of worship like Salah (Prayer), Sawm (Fast), Ruku` (bowing), Sujud (prostration), Hajj, Du`a' (supplication), offering sacrifices, vows and others, as included in the previous Ayahs. It is reported in the Sahih Book of Muslim on the authority of `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Allah curses whomever sacrifices to anyone other than Him...﴿ Moreover, it is reported in the Sahih Book of Al-Bukhari on the authority of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only a slave.﴿

﴾So, call me Allah's Slave and Messenger.﴿ There are many well-known Hadith commanding devoting `Ibadah to Allah Alone and forbidding Shirk. Women are not to visit the graves as the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) cursed the women who visit graves. The wisdom behind this - Allah knows best - is that their visit may cause Fitnah (temptation) for them and men. At the beginning of

Islam, visiting the graves was forbidden to block all means and ways leading to Shirk. However, when Islam became wide-spread and Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of Allah/ monotheism) prevailed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed visitation for all, then specified that women are prohibited from visiting graves, to block all means leading to Fitnah.

As for the graves of Kafirs (disbelievers), there is no problem to visit them out of remembrance and learning lessons; but one should not invoke Allah (may He be exalted) for them or ask Him to forgive them. This is because it is authentically reported in the Sahih Book of Muslim that the Prophet (peace be upon him) (... asked Allah's Permission to forgive his mother, but he was not permitted, and when he asked Allah's Permission to visit her grave, he was permitted.) This is because she died in Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance), while embracing the religion of her people.

I ask Allah to guide Muslims - male and female - to understand religion and stick to it through utterances, actions and beliefs. I ask Allah to protect us all

from all violations against the purified Shar`. He is the one Capable of doing so. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

The degree of authenticity of stories

circulated on the horrors of the grave

Q: There are widely circulated stories about the horrors of the grave, such as the story of the snake that came out of a grave when a man was to be buried in it and when the man was buried in another grave a snake came out of it again.

A: Allah (Exalted be He) is most knowledgeable about it. However, it is not improbable. In his book "Horrors of the Graves" Ibn Rajab mentioned some facts about such stories. Therefore, Allah (Exalted be He) knows best whether they are true or not.

Ruling on quoting as support stories on the horrors of the graves

Q: May a preacher seek support for his sermon from such stories?

A: It is better not to quote them as their authenticity is questionable. Suffice it to quote facts mentioned in the

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Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is more important to urge people to obey Allah (Exalted be He) and to warn them against disobedience and sins as was the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Stories whose authenticity is doubted are better to be avoided.

Ruling on accompanying some disobedient people while visiting the graves

Q: Some righteous young men take some disobedient people with them to visit the graves so as to make them fear Allah (Exalted be He). What is your opinion in this regard?

A: It is unobjectionable to do so and it is a good deed. We ask Allah (Exalted be He) to reward them well. Actually, this falls under cooperation in goodness and piety.

Hearing a dead person regretting

in his grave dues that have not been fulfilled

Q: What should a person do when he hears a dead person in the grave regretting some dues he has not fulfilled? Should such a person inform the heirs?

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A: In the name of Allah, and Praise be to Allah. If such a person is sure about that, he should inform the heirs. Moreover, he should also inform the deceased's family if he sees the deceased in a night vision. Actually, such things shown by Allah to some of His servants are lessons for them to learn. If this happens, the deceased's family should fulfill his dues, give in charity on his behalf and supplicate to Allah for him.

Moreover, Ibn Rajab in his book Ahwal Al-Qubur (i.e. "Horrors of the Graves") mentioned some stories about kinds of torments received by the dead in their graves for similar reasons. Among them is a story of a grave whose inhabitant was found burning when it was opened (we ask Allah for safety).

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Sanctity of the dead and graves

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Praise be to Allah lone and may peace and blessings be upon him after whom there is no prophet, our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions. I have received many letters implying denunciation of violating the sanctity of graves committed by some people. Therefore, I see it proper to write a brief note on the issue, so as to warn people against doing so. Below are the details.

Hadith authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) indicate the obligation of respecting Muslims who have passed away and not to do them any harm. Undoubtedly, passing thereon with cars, tractors and cattle and throwing rubbish on the graves indicates disrespect. All such acts are Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect), disobedience to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and violation of the sanctity of the dead. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have warned against less heinous, acts such as sitting or

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leaning on a grave. In this regard, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Do not offer Salah (Prayer) facing toward the graves, and do not sit on them.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih). He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾It is better for a person to sit on burning coal by which his clothes may catch fire and the heat thereof may touch his skin than that to sit on a grave.﴿ (Related by Muslim also). Moreover, `Amr Ibn Hazm is reported as saying: ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) saw me leaning on a grave, so he said: "Do not harm the dweller of this grave" or "Do not harm him."﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad)

Accordingly, it is obligatory on all Muslims to show respect to the graves of Muslims and not to commit any aggression against them, such as sitting on them, passing on them with cars or the like, throwing rubbish on them or any such violating behavior. May Allah guide all Muslims to that which might reform the living and safeguard the dead from harm. May Allah also grant everyone deep understanding of religion and abidance by religion-laid restrictions, for indeed He is All-Hearing, Ever-Near. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions.

It is impermissible to wear shoes and walk between graves

Q: Should we put into practice the Hadith stating: (O (proud) man swaggering with costly leather shoes (among the graves), take your shoes off,) **addressed by which is a man who was walking between the graves while wearing leather shoes? Should the behavior of walking between graves while wearing shoes be denounced?**

A: The Hadith is reliable. Therefore, it is impermissible to walk in graves wearing shoes unless there is a need for this, i.e. the whether is hot, the ground is thorny, etc. However, doing so should be condemned and the Shar`y (Islamic legal) ruling should be taught in case it is necessary to do so as was the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who condemned the behavior of the man who wore leather shoes.

Q: What is the Shar`y criterion for taking off shoes when entering a graveyard?

A: They should be taken off while passing among graves. However, they should not be taken off if one is not passing among graves, e.g. one is merely standing at the entrance of the graveyard to greet the dead.

Ruling on living in a cemetery

Q: Some people in some countries live in cemeteries. What is the ruling on this act?

A: Such people should be prohibited and taught the ruling on their act. By doing so, they disrespect the graves and become sinful. Their Salah (Prayer) is also Batil (null and void) if they offer it facing the graves. Staying in this place and offering Salah facing the graves count as Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) due to the Prophet's saying (peace be upon him): ﴾Do not offer Salah facing toward the graves, and do not sit on them.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih), as well as his saying: ﴾May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians for they have taken the graves of their Prophets as places of worship. `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "He warns against what they did."﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It is impermissible to park cars on the graves

Q: In our village, there is a congregational Masjid (mosque) that is surrounded by graves to the north and south.

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There are only two meters between the graves and the Masjid, and the graveyard is growing. Some worshipers - may Allah guide them - use the graveyard as a parking lot. Please give us a ruling on this, may Allah reward you good! Please accept my thanks and appreciation.

A: There is nothing wrong with keeping that Masjid there, because it is customary to bury the dead around the Masjids, and there is no harm in doing so. It makes it easier for the people to bury the dead when they come out of the Masjid following the Funeral Prayer. This is permissible and it does not affect the validity of the Salah (Prayer) that is performed in that Masjid. However, if there are some graves in the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer; towards the Ka'bah) of the Masjid, it is preferable that there should be another wall between the Masjid and the graveyard, other than that of the Masjid, or a road separating them. This would be better and prevent people from facing the graves directly while praying.

If the graves are located to the right or the left of the Masjid, and not in the direction of the Qiblah, there is no problem with this, as the worshipers inside the Masjid will not face the graves by any means.

As for parking cars in the graveyard, this is not permissible.

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People should park their cars in a safe place, far away from the graves. It is not permissible to desecrate graves by using them as a parking lot or to park cars on them. This is Munkar (unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) and impermissible. It is obligatory to move the cars far from the graves and park them in a proper area containing no graves. It would be preferable and safer to put up a fence or something similar, if possible, to prevent people from walking over the graves and desecrating them. A Muslim should be respected both alive and dead. This is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade the performance of Salah at graves and sitting on them.

The grave can be dug up when necessary

Q: Is digging up graves permissible?

A: There is no harm in doing so if there is a necessity, such as forgetting a spade, lever, or something important.

Digging up a grave for a reason

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah Ibn Baz **to His Eminence, the judge of Admah `Ilyan Court, may Allah (Exalted be He) save him. Amen!**

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you). To proceed..

I have received your letter and the attachment including the inquiry of a brother. You said that this man had a grave in front of his house. You mentioned that since this grave was very old and it was liable to be harmed by cars and beasts due to its close proximity to the entrance of the house, you are asking about the permissibility of moving it to the nearby graveyard. You asked to be advised about this.

The answer is: If such is the case, then the grave should be dug up and the remains of the deceased should be taken out and reburied in another grave within the public graveyard.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you)

The General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

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A grave existing in the mosque should be exhumed if it was built later

Q: If digging up a grave existing in a mosque will cause havoc, then should it be dug up or left?

A: Such a grave should be exhumed if it is in the mosque and if the mosque had been built before it. Permission for this should be issued by those in authority, whether the court or rulers, so that this does not cause havoc. However, if the mosque was built later, then it should be demolished. This is based on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians, for they have taken the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim). The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾When he was informed by both Umm Salamah and Umm Habibah that they saw a church in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) that contained pictures, (he said): "When a pious person among those people died, they built a place of worship on his grave, and then decorated it with such pictures. They will be the worst of creatures on the Day of Judgment in the sight of Allah (may He be Exalted)."﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Through these two Hadiths and the other Hadiths of the same meaning,

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it is known that it is impermissible to perform Salah in Masjids (mosques) where there are graves because the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade this and because this is a means that leads to committing Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship), may Allah be Glorified and Exalted.

Ruling on cutting down harmful trees away from graveyards

Q: Is it permissible to cut down harmful trees away from graveyards?

A: Such trees should be cut down because they cause harm to the people who come to visit the graves. Similarly any thorny plants that grow there should also be removed. It is not prescribed for anyone to plant any kind of trees or plants in a graveyard, for Allah (may He be Praised) has not prescribed this.

Although the Prophet (peace be upon him) planted two palm stalks on the graves of two people whom he knew were being punished, he did not plant anything on the graves of Madinah or of Baqi` (the graveyard of Madinah, near the Prophet's Mosque). The Companions did not do any such thing either, so we know that this was only for the occupants of the two graves who were being punished. We ask Allah to grant us safety.

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Q: Is it permissible to cut down harmful trees in graveyards?

A: They should be cut because they cause harm to the people who come to visit the graves, particularly thorny trees. If some laypersons believe in the blessings of such trees because they grow on the grave of a person they claim to be Waliy of Allah (a pious person), then such plants must be cut down so as to remove the means of committing Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and overestimating the deceased.

Ruling on moving the bones of the decomposed bodies

Q: If the bones of the deceased have decomposed, is it permissible to move them to another place?

A: In case of necessity, there is neither harm nor sin in doing so. Otherwise, the graves should remain as they are.

Ruling on breaking the bones of the dead body of a Kafir

Q: Is it permissible to break the bones of the dead body of a Kafir (non-Muslim)?

A: This requires a more detailed explanation. It is impermissible to violate the sanctity of the dead body of a Dhimmy (protected non-Muslim living under Islamic rule), Mu`ahad (non-Muslim in a temporary covenant with Muslims) or Musta'man (non-Muslim with a peace agreement permitting them to enter and stay temporarily in a Muslim country). As for the non-Muslim enemy warrior, it is permissible to do so with his body. It is also permissible to take organs from his body since he was an enemy warrior. But this does not apply to the dead body of the Mu`ahad, Dhimmy, or Musta'man, because their bodies are respected.

Breaking the bones of the dead does not necessitate Qisas

Q: Does breaking the bones of a dead person necessitate Qisas (just retaliation)?

A: It does not necessitate Qisas, as Qisas is applied to the living under certain conditions.

Ruling on transplantation from clinically dead persons

Q: What is the ruling on transplanting organs from clinically dead persons?

A: The Muslim should be respected alive or dead. It is an obligation not

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to harm or disfigure him by, for instance, breaking and cutting his bones. It was reported in a Hadith: ﴾Breaking the bone of the dead is like breaking it when they are alive﴿ This is evidence of the impermissibility of mutilating the dead in favor of the living, such as taking his heart or kidney, and so on, for this is more grievous than breaking his bones.

However, scholars disagreed over the permissibility of donating organs. Some say this benefits the living, due to the increased number of kidney failures. However, this is disputable. Based on the above-mentioned Hadith, I see that it is not permissible, because this entails manipulation and abuse of the organs of the dead. Besides, the heirs may run after money and give no heed to the sanctity of the dead, though they do not inherit the body; they inherit the property of the deceased. May Allah grant us success.

It is not permissible to execute

a will to donate the organs of the dead

Q: If someone made a will before they die to donate their organs after death, should the will be executed?

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A: The preponderant view (among scholars) is that it is not permissible to execute it even if the dead person made a will to that effect. See the answer of the above question. That is because the body of the deceased is no longer their own.

Ruling on buying cadavers for anatomy

Q: Some medicine colleges buy cadavers from South East Asia for anatomical purposes. What is the ruling on this?

A: There is nothing wrong with this if the corpses are of Kafirs (disbelievers/non-Muslims) from countries without a peace agreement. However, it is not permissible to do this with anyone other than them.

Ruling on dissecting a corpse for educational purposes

Q: I have noticed that in the Faculty of Medicine in Cairo there is a room for dissecting the corpses of men, women and children for educational purposes. Is this religiously permissible out of necessity, particularly in case of a man dissecting a woman's body and woman dissecting a man's body? Is it permissible to cut human organs?

A: If the deceased is protected during his lifetime being a Muslim,

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Kafir (disbeliever/non-Muslim), man or woman, it is not permissible to dissect their bodies, for this entails harming and humiliating their sanctity. It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ("Breaking the bone of the deceased is like breaking it when they are alive.") However, if they are not protected, such as an apostate or a non-Muslim enemy warrior, I do not see anything wrong with dissecting his body for medical purposes. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) knows best.

A clinically dead person is not judged dead

Q: Should the person who is clinically dead be judged dead?

A: They should not be judged dead. We should not hasten to obtain such a judgment; rather, we should wait till they die unquestionably. Some physicians may hasten to pronounce them clinically dead in order to take some of their parts and organs and to manipulate them. All this is impermissible.

Q: What is your opinion concerning the physicians' claim that the clinically dead person can never survive?

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A: This claim is unreliable and cannot be acted upon accordingly. There is no evidence to prove that this claim is correct. I came to know that some of those who were pronounced clinically dead survived later on. Anyway, the person who is clinically dead is not to be considered like someone who is actually dead and does not get their rulings till his death is ascertained unquestionably.

Ruling on dissecting the dead body to examine the cause of the murder

Q: What is the ruling on dissecting the dead body to examine the cause of the murder?

A: If it is for a Shar`y (Islamic legal) reason, it is permissible.

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Ruling on attending condolences gatherings

Q: Is it permissible to attend condolences gatherings?

A: If a Muslim is to attend a gathering to offer condolences to the family of the deceased, this is Mustahab (desirable), for it provides comfort and consolation for them. If he is to drink a cup of coffee or tea or wear perfume, it is permissible, for this is the traditions among people and their visitors.

Ruling on going to offer condolences where there is a Bid`ah being practiced

Q: Is it permissible to go and offer condolences on the death of a person where there is Bid`ah (rejected innovation in religion) being practiced, such as reciting the Qur'an while raising both hands before extending greetings?

A: It is an act of Sunnah (a commendable act) to visit the bereaved family to offer condolences. If there is a Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) being practiced, it should be disapproved of and this should be explained to them. Thus, the person offering condolences can combine both benefits, i.e. offering condolences and condemning and advising the bereaved family. There is no harm in just reciting the Qur'an. Thus, if they gather and someone recites the Qur'an, such as reciting Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) and other Surahs during the gathering, there is neither harm nor Munkar in doing so. Whenever gathering with his Companions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite

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the Qur'an. Thus, if they gather to give their condolences in a venue where someone of them recites some of the Qur'an, this will be better than keeping silent.

However, if there are some acts of Bid`ah (rejected innovation in religion) other than that (you have mentioned); for example, if the bereaved family is serving food for people (offering condolences), then they should be taught and given advice to abandon this. Thus, when seeing a Munkar, the person offering condolences should give advice.

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾By Al-'Asr (the time).﴿ ﴾Verily, man is in loss,﴿ ﴾Except those who believe (in Islâmic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth [i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'ruf) which Allâh has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar which Allâh has forbidden], and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allâh's Cause during preaching His religion of Islâmic Monotheism or Jihâd).﴿ and: ﴾Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwâ (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ﴾"Whoever, among you, sees something abominable should rectify it with his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue; and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of Faith."﴿ As for what the inquirer has mentioned regarding that the person who offers condolences and raises his hands and recites (some of) the Qur'an before entering (the house of the bereaved family), all this is an act of Bid`ah. However, if one of them recites the Qur'an while the others are listening in order for all to benefit, there is no harm in this.

There is no harm in receiving people offering condolences

Q: What is the opinion of your Eminence regarding those who stay at home to receive the people who offer condolences, noting that many of them can only offer condolences at the home of the bereaved family?

A: As far as I know, there is no harm on the part of the person who has been afflicted with the death of one of his relatives, wife, and so on, to receive condolers at home at the proper time. This is because offering condolences is an act Sunnah (a commendable act) and receiving them enables them to carry out this act. If such a person shows them hospitality through serving coffee, tea, or perfume, then all this is good.

Ruling on gathering the bereaved family in one row so as to offer them condolences

Q: Some people ask a bereaved family to stand in one row in a place away from the graves in order to receive condolences in order that the graves are not desecrated. What is the ruling on this?

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A: As far as I know, there is no harm in doing this, because this makes the procession of offering condolences easier.

Ruling on kissing and hugging the bereaved

Q: We notice that, during the time of bereavement, people usually kiss or hug the bereaved when they offer their condolences. Some people renounce this and say that condolences should be offered by shaking hands only. What is Your Eminence's opinion on this?

A: It is better, when offering condolences and when meeting someone, to shake hands. However, if the person offering their condolences or receiving them has just returned from a journey, it is prescribed to shake their hands and hug them, according to the Hadith reported by Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, (They (the Companions of the Prophet) used to shake hands when they met each other and hug each other when they returned from a journey.) May Allah grant success!

condolence on the death of a sinner

Q: Sometimes people die due to suicide, an alcohol overdose,

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or are killed by someone defending themselves against that person. Is it permissible under these circumstances to offer condolences to the bereaved families, as I hesitate as to whether I should go to offer my condolences in such cases or not?

A: There is no harm in offering condolences in such cases; in fact it is Mustahab (desirable), even if the deceased had committed suicide or another sin. It is also Mustahab for the family of someone who is killed due to Qisas (just retaliation) or to the application of a Had (ordained punishment for violating Allah's Law), such as a Muhsan (someone in a state of fortification against illegal sexual intercourse outside marriage by virtue of valid current or previous marriage) who has committed Zina (adultery) or someone who drank themselves to death. This does not prohibit the offering of condolences to their family or supplicating to Allah to forgive and have mercy upon them and other sinners like them. They should be washed and the Funeral Prayer performed for them, but eminent Muslims, such as the ruler, judges and their like, should not perform the Funeral Prayer with the people. Just a few people should perform the Funeral Prayer for them as a deterrent to others against their evil ways. As for those who are killed by an aggressor, they have been wronged, so people should perform the Funeral Prayer for them and supplicate to Allah for them, if they are Muslims. The same applies to someone who is killed due to Qisas; the people should perform the Funeral Prayer for them, supplicate to Allah for them, and offer condolences to their family, if they are Muslims and have not done anything that has rendered them apostates. May Allah grant us success!

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Ruling on travelling to offer condolences

Q: What is the ruling on travelling to offer condolences and staying with the family of the deceased?

A: That depends on the situation of the family of the deceased. If that will be a burden on them, then it is not permissible. However, if they would like it, then there is nothing wrong with that. There are no restrictions on this matter.

Q: What is the ruling on a person who travels to offer condolences on the death of a relative or a friend? Is it permissible to offer condolences before the burial?

A: As far as we know, there is no harm in travelling to offer condolences on the death of a relative or friend because this involves sympathizing and alleviating the pain resulting from the calamity. There is no harm in offering condolences either before or after the burial. The closer this is to the time of the calamity, the more this will be proper for alleviating its pain. May Allah grant us success.

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From Abdul Aziz Bin Abdullah Ibn Baz to our dear respected brother, may Allah grant him safety!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!). With reference to your request for Fatwa registered in the Department of Scientific Research no. (2790) dated (8/9/1405 A.H.) wherein you ask about the fences of the mosque, about offering Funeral Salah over the deceased at the graveyard after burying him, about the Zakah due on salaries, and about travelling to offer condolences for someone on the death of one of his relatives,

I want to inform you that what is inside the mosque's fence is to be considered part of the mosque. Thus, it is impermissible either to sell goods or to search for one's lost object therein. Rather, it is permissible to offer Salah therein. As for travelling to offer condolences for a Muslim person on the death of one of his relatives, there is no harm in doing so. Supplicating Allah (Exalted be He) for the deceased and asking Him to have mercy on them during the Friday sermons is permissible and it is permissible to offer the Funeral Prayer over the deceased after burial because it was done by the Prophet (peace be upon him). As for Zakah on salaries, the following details should be considered: If it remains one year within the person's possession where it reaches the Nisab (the minimum amount on which Zakah is due), then there is obligatory Zakah to be paid on this money. Yet, if it is less than the Nisab (the minimum amount on which Zakah is due), or if it has been in the person's possession for less than one year, rather, the person spends it before this, then there is no Zakah to be paid for the money.

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May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him! He is All-Hearing and Responsive. May Allah's Peace,

Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!

The General Chairman of

the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

The number of days for offering condolences is not limited

Q: Does offering condolences have a time limit?

A: As far as I know, it does not have a definite limit.

Q: Is offering condolences limited to a certain number of days because it is said that it extends to just three days. Please answer me. May Allah reward you well.

A: There are no specific days for offering condolences. Rather, it starts from the time the soul leaves the body, before the Funeral Prayer and afterwards. There is no set time limit for that in the purified Shari`ah (Islamic law). Condolences may be offered at night or day, at home, in the street, in the Masjid (mosque), in the graveyard, or anywhere else. May Allah grant us success.

Is specifying three days for offering condolences on the part of the bereaved family considered an innovated matter? Should children, old people, and patients with incurable diseases be offered condolences upon their death?

A: Offering condolences is an act of the Sunnah because it involves relieving the misfortune of the afflicted person and supplication to Allah (Exalted be He) to endow the dead person

all that is good. It makes no difference whether the deceased is young or old. There is no specific wording to be said on such an occasion. Rather, a Muslim should offer condolences to his brother and say appropriate words, such as "may Allah offer you the best condolences, relieve your ordeal, and forgive the deceased," if the deceased is a Muslim. However, if the deceased is a Kafir (disbeliever), it is impermissible to supplicate for him, rather, his Muslim relatives should be offered condolences with the above-mentioned words. There is no fixed time or days for offering condolences; it starts upon the death of the deceased, before and after the Funeral Prayer and before and after the burial. It is permissible to offer condolences after three days from the death of the deceased, because there is no proof setting a limit to the number of days for offering or receiving condolences.

Lawful words for offering condolences

Q: A brother from Cairo asks: When wanting to offer condolences to someone for the death of one of his relatives, some people say "may rest be in your life", "be strong," and so on.

Are there specific words to be said on such an occasion? Should a person confine himself to such words? Please answer me. May Allah reward you.

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A: I know of no specific supplication reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard. However, it is permissible for the one offering condolences to say to his Muslim brother upon the death of one of his relatives any appropriate words, such as "may Allah offer you the best condolences, relieve your ordeal, increase your reward, forgive your deceased," and so on.

I know of no origin for offering condolences by saying "may the rest be in your life" or "be strong". May Allah grant us all success.

Ruling on holding mourning ceremonies

Q: It is our custom when someone dies, that their family holds a mourning ceremony. People gather at the house of the deceased, ornamental lights are hung outside the house (similar to those used for weddings), and the bereaved family lines up. Those wishing to offer their condolences pass by them, one after the other, putting their hands on the chest of each of them, saying: "May Allah reward you greatly!" Are these gatherings and practices in accordance with the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet)? If they are not, what is the Sunnah at this time? Please advise us and may Allah reward you with the best!

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A: These practices are not in accordance with the Sunnah, and we do not know of any basis in the Shari`ah (Islamic law) for them. The Sunnah is to offer condolences to the bereaved family, in no specific way and without holding special gatherings like this one. It is prescribed for Muslims to offer condolences to their fellow Muslims after the soul has left body, whether in their home, on the road, in the Masjid (mosque), or by the grave, and whether it is before or after the Funeral Prayer. It is prescribed to shake hands with them and supplicate to Allah for them, using a suitable Du`a' (supplication), such as: "May Allah reward you greatly, give you consolation, and compensate your loss!" If the deceased is a Muslim, they may supplicate to Allah to forgive them and be merciful with them. Similarly, it is prescribed for women to offer condolences to each other. A man may offer condolences to a woman and a woman to a man, as long as it does not involve Khulwah (being alone with a member of the opposite sex) or shaking hands, if the woman is a non-Mahram (not a spouse or an unmarriageable relative). May Allah grant success to the Muslims in comprehending His Din (religion of Islam) and adhering to it! And He is the Best One to be asked!

Ruling on a bereaved family sitting to receive condolences for three days

Q: Some bereaved families sit to receive condolences for three days. What is the ruling on this?

A: If they sit so people can offer condolences to them, there is nothing wrong with this - In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills) - if they do so in order not to tire the people and as long as they do not prepare food for them.

gathering in the house of the deceased to eat, drink, and recite Qur'an is Bid'ah

Q: In some countries, when a person dies, people gather in the house of the deceased for three days performing Salah (Prayer) and supplicating to Allah for the deceased. What is the ruling on this?

A: Gathering in the house of the deceased to eat, drink, and recite Qur'an is Bid'ah (innovation in religion). It is also not permissible to perform Salah at the house; in fact men should perform congregational Salah in the Masjid (mosque). People should only come to offer condolences to the bereaved family, supplicate for them, and ask Allah to have mercy upon the deceased. Gathering to hold mourning ceremonies with a special recitation of the Qur'an, special forms of Du'a' (supplication), or similar, is Bid'ah. If it was something good, the Salaf (righteous predecessors) would have preceded us in doing it. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also did not do it. When Ja'far ibn Abu Talib, 'Abdullah ibn Rawahah, and Zayd ibn Harithah (may Allah be pleased with them) were killed in the Battle of Mu'tah, he (peace be upon him) was informed of the news of their death through Wahy (Revelation). He announced their deaths to his Sahabah (Companions), invoked Allah to be pleased with them and supplicated to Allah for them, but he did not hold a mourning ceremony for them. The Sahabah did not do anything like this either after his death. When Al-Siddiq (Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him) died, they did not hold a mourning ceremony.

When 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was killed, they did not hold a mourning ceremony or gather the people to recite Qur'an for him. When 'Uthman and 'Aly (may Allah be pleased with them) were killed, the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them) did not do anything for them like this either. The Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) is for the relatives or neighbors to prepare food for the bereaved family and send it to them, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did when he received the news that Ja'far had been killed. He asked his wives to ("Make food for the family of Ja'far, for there has come to them what is preoccupying them.") (Related by the Five Compilers of Hadith [Imams Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah], except Al-Nasa'y) This is what is Islamically prescribed. But to add more burden to the family of the deceased and to expect them to prepare food for people is what contradicts the Sunnah, and constitutes a Bid'ah for the already mentioned reasons, and for the saying of Jarir ibn 'Abdullah Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him), ("We used to consider gathering at a bereaved family's house after burial and preparing food after the burial as a form of wailing.") (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ibn Majah with a Sahih [authentic] Isnad [chain of narrators]) Wailing, i.e. crying loudly, is Haram (prohibited), and the deceased is tortured in their graves because of people's wailing over them, as authentically reported in the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), so it is obligatory that it should be avoided. as for crying, there is no sin in that; if it is only tears flowing from the eyes without any wailing,

because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, upon the death of his son Ibrahim, ("The eye sheds tears and the heart sorrows, but we will not say except that which pleases our Lord, and truly we, for parting with you, O Ibrahim, are grieved.")

Ruling on holding a banquet for the people who gather to offer condolences

Q: Some people have the custom that when someone dies, their relatives slaughter camels and sheep and hold a banquet for those who gather to offer condolences and listen to the Qur'an recitation. What is the ruling on this act?

A: This act counts as Bid`ah (innovation in religion). The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Sahabah (Companions) did not do this. It was authentically reported on the authority of Jarir Ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly, the known Sahaby (may Allah be pleased with him), said: ﴾We used to count gathering with the family of the deceased and making food for them after the burial to be a kind of wailing.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ibn Majah through an authentic Isnad)

The prescribed act is that

the relatives or neighbors prepare food in their houses and send it to the bereaved family, who are preoccupied with the calamity of death. It was authentically narrated on the authority of `Abdullah Ibn Ja`far (may Allah be pleased with them) that when the death news of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) reached the Prophet (peace be upon him), the latter asked his family ﴾to prepare food for the family of Ja`far for they are preoccupied with their disaster.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy and Ibn Majah through an authentic chain of narrators).

In addition to being a Bid`ah, the bereaved family who are afflicted with a disaster bears more burdens and wastes money wrongfully. Allah is the One Whose help is sought.

Preparing food for the bereaved family

Q: What is the ruling on slaughtering an animal for the family of a deceased person?

A: There is nothing wrong with this if it is to be done by neighbors and relatives. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered his family to make food for the family of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) when he was informed of his death in Al-Sham (The Levant). He (peace be upon him) said:

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(There came upon them (Ja`far's family) an incident which has engaged them.)

The deceased's family is not to make food for people

Q: If the deceased's family prepared food for themselves, is this permissible?

A: This is permissible if they are to make food for themselves, but not for people.

Ruling on the deceased family inviting others to eat from the food that is made for them

Q: If lunch or dinner is made for the deceased's family and people gather to eat with them, is this considered an act of forbidden wailing?

A: This is not an act of the forbidden wailing, for they did not make the food; rather, it was made for them. There is nothing wrong if they invite people to eat from the food that is sent for them, for it may be too much.

Ruling on sending animals for the deceased's family to slaughter

Q: What is the ruling on sacrificing animals for the deceased's family and inviting people to eat? What is the ruling on attending such condolence gatherings?

A: The act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) for the relatives, friends and neighbors of the deceased is to send food for the bereaved family to spare them the effort of cooking since they are already concerned with something else. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered his family to send food to the family of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) when the news of his death came to him saying: (There came upon them (Ja`far's family) an incident which has engaged them.) As for sending animals, this is against the Sunnah because it burdens them to slaughter and cook. This should not be done because it opposes the Sunnah.

Ruling on paying money to the deceased's family

Q: Some of the people who come to offer their condolences to a bereaved family pay them some money, as much they can afford, is this permissible? May Allah reward you well!

A: The act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) is to prepare food for the deceased's family if possible. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was given the news of the death of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib on the Battle of Mu'tah, he said to his family: (Make food for the family of Ja`far, for there came upon them an incident which has engaged them.) If they are to prepare food for them, this is good.

As for giving them money, this is not Mashru` (Islamically acceptable), unless they are poor or needy; hence they can be given money but not at the time of the funeral but at a later time due to their poverty and need.

Ruling on holding banquets from the estate of the deceased

Q: Some people hold banquets and slaughter sacrificial animals at the time of the death of a relative and the cost of these gatherings is taken from their estate. What is the ruling on this? If the person had asked for this in his will, is it obligatory on his inheritors to carry it out?

A: The will to hold feasts upon one's death is Bid`ah (innovated matter in religion) and one of the practices of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance) and Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect), and so is holding them without the deceased's prior consent. It is an abominable act and not permissible according to what is authentically reported on the authority of Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, ("We used to consider gatherings with the bereaved family and preparing food (for those who come for condolence) after burying the dead as a kind of wailing.") [Related by Imam Ahmad with a good Isnad (chain of narrators)]. Moreover, this goes against the Shari`ah that urges others to prepare food for the bereaved family, who are supposed to be concerned with their distress. It is authentically related that when the Prophet was informed of the martyrdom of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him), in the Battle of Mu'tah, he (peace be upon him) said to his family, ("Prepare food for the family of Ja`far, for they are preoccupied with their affair.")

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Ruling on celebrations held after a person's death

Q: In Yemen it is customary to hold celebrations after the death of a person. They even borrow money to hold such celebrations, prepare food and drinks, etc. even if the deceased was poor and did not leave anything. What is the ruling on such practices? May Allah reward you the best!

A: It is not permissible to hold celebrations after the death of a person. The bereaved family should not hold celebrations, slaughter animals, prepare food for those who come to offer condolences, etc. All these are forms of Bid`ah (innovation in religion) and from the practices of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance) and should be abandoned. It was authentically reported that Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him) said, ﴾We (the Prophet's Companions) considered gathering for visiting the deceased's family, and preparing food after burying them, as acts of wailing.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad with good a chain of narrators).

When someone person passes away, it is permissible for Muslims to ask Allah's forgiveness and Mercy for them. They should abandon the practices of Jahiliyyah, but it is permissible for the relatives and the neighbors to prepare food to

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the bereaved family as they will be occupied with the calamity that has befallen them. It was authentically reported from `Abdullah ibn Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with them): ﴾When the news of the death of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) who was killed in the Battle of Mu'tah which took place in Levant (the region covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine) reached Madinah the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded his family to prepare food for the family of Ja`far and he (peace be upon him) said: "Today they are busy."﴿ Accordingly, the bereaved family should not cook food for those who come to offer condolences.

However, it is permissible to cook food for themselves or for their guests.

Ruling on extravagant funerals

Q: What is the ruling on extravagance in funerals? The bereaved family serves dinners for those who come to offer condolences. There are also some customs that have spread, such as holding a ceremony for people to come and offer condolences again on the third, eighth, and fortieth days after the death of a person.

A: All this is baseless; it is Bid`ah (rejected innovation in religion), Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) and an act of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance). It is impermissible to serve food for the people who come to offer condolences, neither on the first, third, fourth, fortieth or on any other day after the person's death. All these are groundless Bid`ah and practices of Jahiliyyah.

Instead, the bereaved family should praise Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), be patient, thank Him for His Decree, and ask Him to help them bear the suffering. They should not make food for the people who come to offer their condolences.

One of the great Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet), Jarir Ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ﴿We used to consider sitting with the family of the deceased and making food for mourners after burial as a sort of wailing.﴾ (Related by Imam Ahmad with a good Isnad (chain of narration)). The Sahabah considered wailing prohibited, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade it. However, it is permissible for relatives and neighbors to send them food, as they are too grieved to think of cooking. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴿was told of the death of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) in the Battle of Mu'tah in Jordan, he (peace be upon him) asked his family to send food to the family of Ja`far, as "they were too grieved then."﴾ The bereaved family should not serve food for other people, neither on the first, third, fourth, tenth day, nor on any other day.

There is no harm in cooking for themselves or their guests. What is prohibited is to gather people and serve them meals, which contradicts the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet).

Marking the passage of forty days or a year after the death of a person is baseless in the purified Shari`ah

Q: What is the ruling on some traditions observed in funerals such as holding banquets, reciting the Ever-Glorious Qur'an and marking the passage of forty days or a year after the death of a person and the like?

A: Such traditions are baseless in the purified Shari`ah (Islamic law); rather, they are Bid`ah (innovation in religion) related to Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance). Holding a banquet for the death of someone and inviting neighbors and relatives to it is a Bid`ah which is not permissible. Likewise, observing such matters every week or at the passage of a year is an act of Jahiliyyah. It is prescribed for the family of the deceased to practice patience, seeking reward from Allah and saying as the patient people say: To Allah We belong, and to Him we shall return.

Allah promises them a lot of good things. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾They are those on whom are the Salawât (i.e. who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones.﴿ There is nothing wrong with their preparation of food for themselves or for a guest visiting them, based upon the general meaning of evidence.

It is prescribed for their relatives and neighbors to make food for them and deliver it to them, for it

was authentically reported that when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) ﴾was informed of the killing of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) in the battle of Mu'tah, which took place in the Levant (the region covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine) he said to his family: "Make food for the family of Ja`far, for there has come unto them something that will preoccupy them."﴿ This indicates the permissibility of sending food to the family of the deceased on the days of mourning by the relatives or others.

Some acts of Bid`ah (rejected innovation in religion) when offering condolences

Q: We are asking about a phenomenon that is widespread in many Muslim countries, which is the actions done by the bereaved family after finishing the burial of their loved one. They set up large tents or something wherein the bereaved family gather after lighting it up. They hold it in a square or a street to receive people, where they serve coffee, tea and other drinks. In addition, they bring a reciter to recite the Qur'an in return for fees. If this is not possible, they play a cassette recorder to listen to the Qur'an. On the third night, they serve a banquet for everyone. What is the advice of Your Eminence? Is it permissible to take part in it?

A questioner from Makkah.

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A: Such ceremonies are Bid`ah (innovation in religion) that is not permissible to hold or participate in, because it was authentically reported that Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ﴾We used to consider sitting with the family of the deceased and making food for mourners after burial as a sort of wailing.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad with an authentic chain of narration). However, it is an act of the Sunnah to serve food for the bereaved family by their relatives and neighbors. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴾said to his family when he was told of the death of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him): "Serve meals to the family of Ja`far, as they are too grieved."﴿ (Reported by Imam Ahmad and the compliers of Sunnan with an authentic chain of narrators). We ask Allah to grant success to Muslims to what makes them safe and protects their religion and worldly life, He is All-Hearer, Ever Near.

Q: In Syria we have different and sometimes strange customs. For example, when someone dies, people rush to offer condolences carrying what they can afford of food articles such as sugar, rice, and so on, for a week or more.

They sit to chat and have tea and cigarettes, particularly narghile. They keep sitting for a long time. Each day after `Asr Salah, they recite what is called Khatmah (completing of one reading of the whole Qur'an), where each of them recites a Juz' (a 30th of the Qur'an) of

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the Qur'an to complete it. Then they dedicate the reward of this recitation to the deceased. Sometimes two persons exchange the recitation of the same part, where each one recites one page and stops in order for the other to complete the following page, so as to recite the Juz' quickly.

The same thing reoccurs at the fortieth day but this time it starts after Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer after serving one or two banquets for lunch. What is your opinion about this? May Allah reward you well.

A questioner from Syria.

A: Praise be to Allah. Really, offering condolences to the bereaved family is permissible as is the case with sending them food, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) (told his family to serve meals to the family of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib when he was told the news of his death and said: "They are too grieved.") The gathering of the deceased's relatives or others for a day or more to recite the Qur'an and dedicate the rewards to the deceased is a baseless Bid`ah (innovation in religion) that has no origin in the purified Shari`ah.

The same applies to what you have mentioned concerning what is done on the fortieth day; this has no origin in the purified Shari`ah.

Smoking is Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) at all times, resulting in a great deal of harm.

We ask Allah to keep Muslims safe from all evils, to grant them success to follow the Sunnah, and to be careful in all their affairs, He is the Most Generous. May Allah grant us success.

Celebrations held for the deceased

Q: What is the basis of the celebration held on the third day after the burial of a dead person?

A: It was innovated by those who are ignorant of Islam as well as their duty to observe its principal and subsidiary matters. They do not have good religious sense; rather, it is mixed with the traditions of misguided people. It is an unacceptable Bid`ah (innovation in religion) for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Whoever does an action which is not in accordance with this matter of ours (Islam), will have it rejected.)

The fortieth day commemoration is a Pharaonic custom

Q: What is the origin of the fortieth day commemoration? Is there any evidence of the lawfulness of this commemoration?

A: First: The origin of this custom is Pharaonic. It was practiced by

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the Pharaohs before Islam, and then it spread from them to others. It is a reprehensible Bid'ah (innovation in religion) that has no basis in Islam and is to be rejected, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, (“Anyone who introduces anything into this matter of ours (Islam) that is not part of it, will have it rejected.”) Second: commemorating and eulogizing the dead in the way they are done nowadays, by gathering for that purpose and exceeding proper limits in praising the deceased, is not permissible, based on the Hadith related by Ahmad and Ibn Majah, and ranked as Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish) by Al-Hakim. It is related that ‘Abdullah ibn Abu Awfa said, (“The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade eulogies.”) This is because describing the attributes of the deceased usually involves boasting, renews grief, and agitates sorrow.

However, simply commending the deceased when they are mentioned or when their funeral procession passes by, or acquainting people with them by mentioning their good deeds or similar, in a manner that resembles the eulogies of the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) for those who were killed at Uhud and others, is permissible. It was authentically reported on the authority of Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said, (“A funeral procession passed by and people spoke well of the deceased. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘It is deserved.’ Then another funeral procession passed by and they spoke ill of the deceased. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘It is deserved.’ ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said, ‘What did they deserve?’

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He (peace be upon him) said, ‘The first one you spoke well of, and he deserved Jannah (Paradise), and the second one you spoke ill of, and he deserved Hell. You are the witnesses of Allah on earth.’”)

A note on some funeral-related matters

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah Ibn Baz to every Muslim who may receive it. May Allah guide us to do good and to avoid Bid`ah (innovation in religion) and evil! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

It is my duty to alert and warn people against some matters related to funerals, that some people commit and should not be overlooked, because they contradict the Shari`ah (Islamic law); rather, I should warn against them.

I say - and Allah is the One Who grants success: Every Muslim should be very certain that any distress befalling him is by Allah's Decree and Predestination and that he should be patient and seek Allah's reward for it. The inflicted person should seek help and consolation from Allah and abide by His Orders to seek help in patience and Salah (Prayer) to receive what Allah has promised for the patient in His Saying: ﴾but give glad tidings to As-Sâbirûn (the patient).﴿ ﴾Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allâh we belong and truly, to Him we shall return."﴿ ﴾They are those on whom are the Salawât (i.e. who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones.﴿

It was reported by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith on the authority of Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saying: ﴾If any servant (of Allah) who suffers a calamity says: "We belong to Allah and to Him shall we return; O Allah, reward me for my affliction and give me something better than it in exchange for it," Allah will give him a reward for the affliction, and would give him something better than it in exchange.﴿ The inflicted person should beware not to say anything that might make him lose his reward and provoke Allah's Anger, such as complaining and showing dissatisfaction. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) is just and does not oppress anyone. To Him belongs what He gives or takes, and everything has an appointed time with Him. He has Absolute Wisdom; He does what He wills and whoever opposes this is actually opposing Allah's Decree and Predestination which is the core interest, wisdom, justice and righteousness.

A person should not invoke Allah to afflict him with a calamity, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When Abu Salamah died: "Do not supplicate for yourselves anything but good, for angels say: 'Amen' to what you say."﴿ They should seek the reward of Allah and praise Him.

Besides, offering condolences to the deceased's family is Mustahab (desirable). It was reported on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

("Whoever consoles a calamity-stricken person will have a reward similar to his.") What is meant, is to console, comfort and relieve the afflicted.

There is nothing wrong with crying over the dead, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so when his son Ibrahim and some of his daughters died.

With regard to wailing, mourning, slapping the cheeks, tearing clothes, scratching the face, tearing out hair, invoking damn and destruction and the like, all this is Haram (prohibited). It was reported on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("He is not one of us: the one who strikes the cheeks, rends the garments and wails in the manner of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance).") It was reported on the authority of Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him) that (the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) had no concern with the Saliqah, Haliqah and Shaqqah.) This is because all such things indicate agony, dissatisfaction and discontent.

The Saliqah is the woman who wails loudly; Haliqah, the woman who shaves her hair; and Shaqqah, the woman who tears her garments in grief

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at a time of distress.

It is Mustahab to make food for the family of the deceased and send it to them, as a form of support and showing condolences, as they might be too grieved to think about making food for themselves. It was reported by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy and Ibn Majah through a Sahih (authentic) Sanad (chain of narrators) on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) that (when the news of the death of Ja`far came, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: 'Make food for the family of Ja`far, for they have been afflicted with what will preoccupy them.") It was reported on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them) that he said: ""We continued to abide by this act of Sunnah (preparing food for bereaved families) until a time came when some people started to give it up."

With regard to the deceased's family preparing food for those who come to offer condolences, whether the cost is from the share of the heirs, the deceased's one-third of the wealth which he left behind or by someone else, this is not permissible for this is in contradiction with the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) and is an act of Jahiliyyah. This is an overburden and distraction for them. It is reported by Ahmad and Ibn Majah with a good Sanad on the authority of Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: (We used to consider sitting with the family of the deceased and making food for mourners after burial a sort of wailing.)

With regard to Hidad (prescribed mourning period during which a widow does not adorn herself and keeps to the home of her deceased husband), the woman is forbidden to observe Hidad for more than three days if the deceased is someone other than her husband; however, for her husband, a widow should observe Hidad only during the period of her `Iddah (woman's prescribed waiting period after divorce or widowhood).

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("It is not lawful for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to observe Hidad over a dead person for more than three nights, except over a husband, (in which case the period of Hidad is) four months and ten (days).")

Concerning women observing Hidad for an entire year, this is in contradiction with the tolerant Shari`ah (Islamic law) and is one of the traditions of Jahiliyyah which Islam nullified and warned

against. So it is obligatory to denounce this tradition and recommend one another to avoid it.

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah be merciful with him) said: "This is one of the most outstanding virtues of Shari`ah which shows its proper wisdom and carefulness. Observing Hidad over a dead person comes under glorifying the disaster of death which the people of Jahiliyyah used to give excessive attention, where the woman was to stay in the narrowest, most desolate home and wear no perfume or cream and take no shower besides many other traditions which exhibit dissatisfaction with Allah's Decree. Then Allah nullified this tradition of Jahiliyyah, with His Wisdom, and gave us in exchange the bounty of patience and praise.

Given that the disaster of death would inevitably make the afflicted person feel natural agony, pain and sadness, Allah, the All-Wise, the All-Aware permitted a minimum period of three days during which one can find comfort and vent sadness. Whatever exceeds this period is an overweighing evil

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that should be avoided.

What is meant is that Allah permits a woman to observe Hidad over her dead persons for three days and over her husband according to her respective `Iddah. As for the pregnant woman, her Hidad ends when she goes into labor, for her Hidad lasts for her delivery." End of quote.

As for gathering after the woman ends her `Iddah, this is a Bid`ah (innovation in religion), if this includes wailing, lamenting and such things which Allah has prohibited. If the gathering is not to include any of these prohibited actions, it is fine. As for marking the anniversary of the death of a person, it is not authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) or any of the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) or the Salaf (righteous predecessors) held gatherings for a dead person at the time of his death or for marking the passage of a week, forty days or a year over his death. All these are Bid`ah and abominable habits.

All such matters should be avoided and denounced and one should repent to Allah of them for they entail Ibtida` (heresy) and resemblance to the Mushriks (ones who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship). It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I have been sent ahead of the Hour with the sword so that Allah will be worshiped Alone, and my provision has been placed in the shade of my spear, and humiliation has been decreed for those who go against my command, and whoever imitates a people is one of them.﴿ It was also authentically reported that he

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(peace be upon him) said: ﴾"Whoever does an action that is not part of this matter of ours (Islam), will have it rejected."﴿ There are so many other Hadiths that prohibit resembling the Mushriks and Ibtida`. Allah knows best!

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

Ruling on publishing obituaries in newspapers

Q: What is the ruling on publishing obituaries in newspapers?

A: This is a debatable matter for it usually involves exaggeration. It may be lawful if they are sincere and contain no exaggeration, but it is better to avoid them to be on the safe side. If someone wants to offer condolences, they can write a letter or call by the phone or visit the deceased's family, this is more perfect.

Q: What is the ruling on publishing obituaries in newspapers? Is it considered of the prohibited obituaries?

A: This is not a form of prohibited obituaries, but it is better to avoid it for it is a waste of money.

Ruling on saying: "Gone to the final abode"

Q: What is the ruling on saying in obituaries: "Gone to the final abode" on declaring that someone has died?

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A: I do not know of anything wrong with this, for it is their final abode as far as the worldly life is concerned and it is a common phrase. As for the real final abode, it is either the Jannah (Paradise) for the righteous people or the Hell-fire for the Kafirs (disbelievers/non-Muslims).

Ruling on saying: "O (you) the one in (complete) rest and satisfaction!"

Q: What is the ruling on saying: "O (you) the one in (complete) rest and satisfaction!" when someone dies?

A: This is a mistake, for no one knows how the dead was. It is prescribed to ask Allah to have forgiveness and mercy upon him and this is sufficient.

Ruling on the deceased's family asking people to absolve the dead of all blame or to forgive him

Q: What is the ruling on the deceased's family saying to people: "Absolve your brother of all blame, forgive him or ask for Allah's forgiveness for him?"

A: I do not know of any basis for this. However, if it is known that the dead person wronged them and asked them to forgive him, it is fine. Otherwise, it is sufficient to ask them to make Du`a' (supplication) and Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah).

Ruling on distributing papers indicating places of Funeral Prayer and offering condolences

Q: In my work, when a colleague dies we distribute papers indicating the place of the Funeral Prayer and offering condolences, what is the ruling on this?

A: I do not know of anything wrong with this, as the Prophet (peace be upon) did this with Al-Najashy. There is nothing wrong with declaring that the Funeral Prayer is to be offered in a certain Masjid (mosque).

Ruling on poems that eulogize the dead

Q: Are poems that include eulogies a Haram (prohibited) form of obituary?

A: Poems that include eulogies for the dead are not a Haram form of obituary, but it is not permissible for anyone to exceed the proper limits in regard to anyone or to lie about the qualities of the deceased, as many poets do.

A letter of consolation

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From 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz to his dear brother, A. M. N., his brothers and sisters, and their families; may Allah grant everyone success in what pleases Him and compensate their loss!

As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I was informed of your father's death - may Allah be merciful to him! May Allah console and strengthen you. May He forgive the deceased and bestow His Mercy and Grace upon him, and make all his progeny more righteous! It is not hidden to any of us that death is the path that shall and must be trodden by all. The Messengers (peace be upon them), who are the best of all people, died. If anyone were to escape death, it would have been them. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing).﴿ it is prescribed for Muslims, when misfortunes befall them, to be patient and have Ihtisab (confident anticipation of Allah's Recompense) and to say as those who are patient say: ﴾"Truly! To Allâh we belong and truly, to Him we shall return."﴿ Allah promises them great goodness in return.

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He says: ﴾They are those on whom are the Salawât (i.e. who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have said, ﴾"No Servant (of Allah) who suffers a calamity and says: 'Inna lil-lahi wa ina ilayhi raji'un, Allahumma ujurni fi musibati wa ukhluf li khayran minha (Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return; O Allah, reward me (for my patience) in my calamity and compensate me with something better than it),' but Allah will surely reward them in their calamity and compensate them with something better than it."﴿ I ask Allah to compensate you all on your affliction, grant you righteous progeny, and repay you with goodness and a blessed end!

We advice you to have patience and hope for Allah's reward, to cooperate in righteousness and piety, to ask Allah to forgive your father, to supplicate for him to enter Jannah (Paradise) and save him from the Fire, and to hasten to repay his debts, if he was indebted. We also advise all his wives to stay at home until the end of their 'Iddah (woman's prescribed waiting period after divorce or widowhood). Allah (Glorified be He) says:﴾ And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it). And fear Allâh; verily, Allâh is Severe in punishment.﴿ May Allah compensate all of you for your loss, increase your rewards, forgive your father, and make his abode be in Jannah! He is All-Hearer, Ever Near. As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

President of the Islamic University

Ruling on patience, gratitude, and contentment in affliction

Q: Is it Wajib (obligatory) to be grateful to Allah at the time of afflictions?

A: It is Wajib to be patient. As for contentment and gratitude, they are only Mustahab (desirable). There are three matters at the time of affliction: patience is Wajib, contentment is a Sunnah (a commendable act), and gratitude is the best.

Ruling on wailing over the deceased

Q: I have told my brother that when I die, he should not cry over me or announce my death through a microphone, but I am afraid that he will do that. What is your advice to them? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is obligatory on Muslims under these circumstances to have patience and Ihtisab (confidently anticipate Allah's Recompense). They should not wail, tear their clothes, slap their cheeks, or any such practices, as the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, ("They are not of us (not following our way):

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those who slap their cheeks, tear the front opening of their garment, and lament as in Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance).") He (peace be upon him) also said in a Hadith Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish), ("Four (bad habits) characteristic of Jahiliyyah that are found in my Ummah (nation based on one creed), which they will not abandon: taking pride in noble descent, impugning lineage, ascribing the falling of rain to the stars, and wailing.") He also said, ("If a wailing woman does not make Tawbah (repentance to Allah) before she dies, she will be raised on the Day of Resurrection wearing a garment of tar and a shirt of scabs.") (Related by Muslim in his "Sahih [Book of Authentic Hadith]")

wailing is crying loudly over a deceased person and it is reported that, ("The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) disowned any woman who raises her voice in lament, the one who shaves her hair at times of calamity and the one who rends her garment.") Some women used to shave their head or pluck their hair out at times of calamity;

others used to tear their clothes, and others used to wail loudly. All these practices show impatience, and it is not permissible for a woman or a man to do any of these things. It is obligatory on your family to carry out your wishes and avoid wailing over you, because this not only harm them, but you also, according to what was mentioned in this

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Sahih Hadith: ("The deceased is punished in their grave because of the wailing over them.") So it is not permissible to wail over a deceased person.

As for crying tears and being sad, there is no harm in this. What is forbidden is wailing loudly, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said when his son Ibrahim died, ("Truly, the eye sheds tears and the heart sorrows, but we will not say except that which pleases our Lord, and truly we, for parting with you, O Ibrahim are grieved.") He (peace be upon him) also said, ("Allah does not punish for the tears of the eye or the grief of the heart, but He punishes for this (pointing to his tongue) or He may show mercy.")

Ruling on the one who made a will not to wail upon his death, but the mourners did

Q: If a person makes a will that people are not to wail upon his death, then he dies and people wail over him, is he to be tormented?

A: Allah knows best. Yet, they should beware of this. If the person had

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made a will and warned them, he will be safe, based on the Shar`y ruling inferred from the Ayah (Qur'anic verse): ﴾and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another.﴿

There is no harm in a person's eyes shedding tears and his heart feeling sad

Q: If a woman cannot help weeping and thus, she wailed, what is the ruling?

A: Wailing is impermissible whereas there is nothing wrong to shed tears and feel sad in one's heart because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, (upon the death of his son Ibrahim: "The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord. O Ibrahim! Indeed, we are grieved by your departure.")

The deceased person receives torment for wailing

Q: Are the dead to be tormented if their families wail over them?

A: Through wailing only.

Reconciling the Hadith that states: (The deceased is punished because of the lamentation of his family) and Allah's Saying (Exalted be He): (and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another.)

Q: There is a Hadith related by Imam Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful with him) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) reading: (The deceased is punished because of the lamentation of his family.) **Yet, there is another Hadith from `Aishah Umm Al-Mu'minun (The Mother of the Faithful) (may Allah be pleased with her) where she rejects this saying and says: "sufficient for you is the Qur'an":** (and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another.) **What is your answer, may Allah reward you, regarding this issue? Are the dead to be tormented if their families lament them? What about the Ayahs (Qur'anic verses): "And that man can have nothing but what he does (good or bad)", and:** (and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another.) **?**

There is no contradiction between the Hadiths and the Ayah mentioned by `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her). It was authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) through the Hadith related by Ibn `Umar and related by Al-Mughirah as well as others in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) and not in Al-Bukhari only that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The deceased is tormented in the grave because of wailing over him.)

Another narration

in Al-Bukhari reads: "due to his family's crying over him." What is meant here is the raising of one's voice while crying. There is no harm in shedding tears. What causes this harm is to weep aloud, which is called wailing. Through this Hadith, the Messenger (peace be upon him) intended to prevent people from wailing over the deceased, keep patient and to give up wailing. Yet, there is no harm in shedding tears and feeling sad in one's heart because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said (upon the death of his son Ibrahim: "The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord. O Ibrahim! Indeed we are grieved by your departure.") Accordingly, the deceased is to be tormented due to the wailing of his family over him. And Allah knows best the manner in which he is tormented due to the wailing. This is an exception of His saying (Exalted be He): (and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another.) There is no contradiction between the Qur'an and the Sunnah; rather, each of them supports and interprets the other. The Ayah is general whereas the Hadith is specific. The Sunnah interprets the Qur'an and explains its meaning. Thus, the torment received by the deceased because of loud weeping by their folks is an exception from the noble Ayah. There is no contradiction between it and the Hadiths. As for the saying of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), this is out of

her diligence and keenness for goodness. However, what was said by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is to be given priority over her saying as well as the saying of any other person, because Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allâh (He is the ruling Judge).﴿ and: ﴾(And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.﴿ There are many Ayahs that stress this meaning. May Allah grant us success.

It is impermissible to refer to the deceased as "the late forgiven or pardoned"

Praise be to Allah. May peace and blessings be upon His Servant and Messenger, our Prophet Muhammad, upon his family, and Companions. It has become common to publish obituaries and condolences offered to the relatives of the deceased in newspapers. These newspapers refer to the deceased as "the late forgiven" and the like, which indicates that he is of the people of the Jannah (Paradise). It is well-known to whomever is acquainted with Islam and `Aqidah (creed) that these things are only known to Allah (Exalted be He). The `Aqidah of Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah (those adhering to the Sunnah and the Muslim main body) is that it is not permissible to judge that someone will enter Jannah or Hellfire, except for those who have been mentioned in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an such as Abu Lahab, or the ten Companions to whom the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) gave the glad tidings of Jannah. Likewise, it is not permissible to judge that someone is forgiven or pardoned.

Instead, one should say "may Allah forgive him," or "may Allah have Mercy upon him," or the like.

May Allah (Glorified be He) guide us all to Al-Sirat-ul-Mustaqim (the Straight Path). May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

The General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

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Q: There are many expressions used when talking about the deceased, such as "the forgiven" or "the one who has been bestowed the mercy of Allah". Are such expressions correct?

A: In this regard, it is ordained to say "may Allah forgive him" or "may Allah be merciful with him" and the like, if the deceased is a Muslim. But it is impermissible to say "the forgiven" or "the one who has been bestowed the mercy of Allah" because it is impermissible to witness that a Mu'ayyan (a certain person) deserves Paradise or Hellfire or the like, except for those for whom Allah witnessed in His Noble Book or for whom His Messenger (peace be upon him) witnessed. Such is the viewpoint of the scholars of Ahl-ul-Sunnah (those adhering to the Sunnah). Among those Allah witnessed in His Noble Book that they are of the people of Hellfire are Abu Lahab and his wife. Among those the Messenger (peace be upon him) witnessed that they would enter Paradise are Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, `Uthman, `Aly, and the rest of the ten Companions who (may Allah be pleased with them) received glad tidings from the Prophet that they are of the people of Paradise as well as others of those the Messenger (peace be upon him) witnessed that they would enter Paradise, such as `Abdullah ibn Salam and `Ukkashah ibn Mihsan (may Allah be pleased with them) or those the Prophet witnessed that they would enter Hellfire, such as his uncle Abu Talib, `Amr ibn Luhay Al-Khuza`y, as well as others. We seek refuge with Allah from this. But as for those whom neither Allah (may He be Praised) nor His Messenger witnessed that they are of the people of Paradise or Hellfire, then it is not for us to witness that a specified person will enter either of them. Similarly, it is not for us to witness that a specified person has already obtained forgiveness or mercy of Allah, except when this is based on a text from the Book of Allah or

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the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) of His Messenger (peace be upon him). Yet Ahl-ul-Sunnah hope (Paradise) for the one whose deeds are good and fear for the one who has committed evils and witness that all believers in general will enter Paradise whereas all unbelievers in general will enter Hellfire.

This is based on what Allah (may He be Praised) made clear in His Clear Book. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿Allâh has promised the believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever﴾ Allah also says in the same Surah: ﴿Allâh has promised the hypocrites - men and women - and the disbelievers, the Fire of Hell; therein shall they abide. It will suffice them.﴾

However, some scholars opine that it is permissible to witness that some person deserves Paradise or Hellfire if there are two just persons witnessing for him to be good or bad. Their view is based on many authentic Hadiths narrated in this regard.

Some of the Bid`ahs (rejected innovations in religion) of funerals

Q: What is the religious ruling of Allah (Exalted be He) and His Messenger (peace be upon him) on such people who, if any of them die, slaughter a sheep which they call "`Aqiqah" without breaking any of its bones. After that, they bury its bones and feces claiming that this is a good deed that should be observed?

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A: This act is a Bid`ah that has no origin in Shari`ah (Islamic law). Thus, it should be stopped and they should offer Tawbah (repentance) to Allah from it, for Tawbah wipes out past deeds and is obligatory for all sins and Bida`. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾And all of you beg Allâh to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful﴿ He (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾O you who believe! Turn to Allâh with sincere repentance!﴿ The lawful `Aqiqah enacted by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in the authentic Sunnah refers to the slaughtered animal on the seventh day after the birth of a child. It is two sheep for a boy and one for a girl.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) offered `Aqiqah for Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn (may Allah be pleased with both of them). It is permitted to distribute the meat to kin, friends, and the poor or to cook it and invite relatives, neighbors, and the poor.

This is the lawful `Aqiqah and it is a stressed Sunnah, but whoever does not offer it will not bear a sin for that.

End of Part Number: 13. Following - if Allah, may He be Exalted, wills is Part Number: 14 that begins with Zakah (obligatory charity)